

WHERE WILL
REALISM GO NEXT?

ADBUSTERS

79

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Journal of the mental environment



EDITION \$8.95

HIPSTER

THE DEAD END OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION



SHAKESPEARE



NEWTON



DESCARTES



NIETZSCHE



GUTENBERG



1945 — Lightswitch.



DA VINCI



JESUS



MARY



PLATO

Time to get into a Western state of mind: turn the pages in your hands from right to left.



FREUD



WITTGENSTEIN



EINSTEIN



CARSON



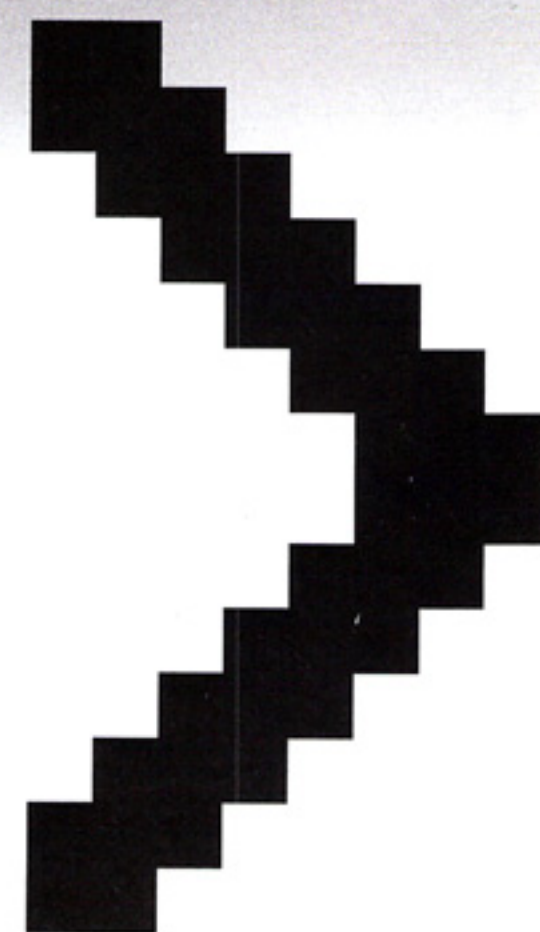
KING



1947 — Main station of an internal office switchboard.

Practical cleverness beats the crap out of spiritual wisdom on the battlefield and in the marketplace, as the West has made clear over the last 500 years. But cleverness without wisdom sooner or later destroys life. Maybe we can work out something here: let spiritual wisdom and practical cleverness meet each other half way – where they can reach a dynamic equilibrium that brings us back into harmony with life as a whole.

Anonymous



FREE to be me

1957 — Ad for Philips. Hans Dukkers.

1953 — At the behest of the British government, US President Dwight D. Eisenhower approves a covert operation to overthrow Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddeq, Iran's democratically elected leader. Mosaddeq had been a driving force behind the nationalization of British oil holdings in Iran. With the help of British and American funds, along with direct CIA assistance, his government would be replaced by the dictatorship of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, whose rule would last until the Islamic revolution of 1979.

In that brief window between the end of WWII and before the Cold War gripped American hearts with fear and suspicion, Sayyid Qutb came to America. It was a time that most Americans consider a period of positive growth: families reunited and starting anew with a sense of relief and hope for a rich and peaceful future. But during an innocent church dance in a small Colorado town, as he watched couples sway cheek-to-cheek to "Baby, It's Cold Outside," Qutb was overcome by what he saw as a moral and spiritual vacuity – a land of uncontrolled inhibitions and misguided freedoms.

He arrived in the alcohol-free and community-focused town of Greeley to complete his MA in education in 1948. The town was conservative by most Western standards, but it was the small, seemingly harmless things that heightened his disillusionment with the American way of life – the upkeep of green lawns, women's "thirsty lips" and the jazz music "that whet their sexual desires." Qutb saw what he had long feared – centuries of spiritual missteps manifested in gratuitous and self-absorbed behavior, leading to a hard-to-resist spiritual depravity. In America, even in a temperate and religious hub, he found a breeding ground of perversion.

Throughout his life, Qutb had an appetite for knowledge and the willpower for devotion, memorizing the Koran by age ten and writing secular poetry and critiques of American literature. Ever stricter as he aged, he never found a woman of rigid enough virtue to marry. But it wasn't until he returned to Cairo from America in 1950 that the urgency to stop American iniquity from spreading developed. The only way to avoid the downfalls he saw in America, he concluded, was to install an all-embracing and radical Islamic state.

Qutb joined the Muslim Brotherhood in 1952 as the editor of the society's newspaper. When the Brotherhood allegedly attempted to assassinate President Nasser in 1954, Qutb and many of his colleagues found themselves in prison, feeling betrayed by a government that once represented high hopes for an Islamic state. His distaste for an insipid America was compounded by the torture he lived through while imprisoned. It was these oppressive conditions that launched his ideas to their extremist ends.

In the 30-volume *In the Shade of the Qur'an*, Qutb outlines the path to purity by dissecting and interpreting the Koran. He urges installing Sharia

law, reinstating a caliphate and conquering *jahiliyyah*, or the spiritual ignorance found in pre-Muhammad times that was resurging in the middle of the twentieth century. For all the anguishing questions that face humanity, he found an answer within Islam. "This religion is really a universal declaration of the freedom of man from servitude to other men and from servitude to his own desires," he wrote. "It is a declaration that sovereignty belongs to God alone and that He is the Lord of all the worlds."

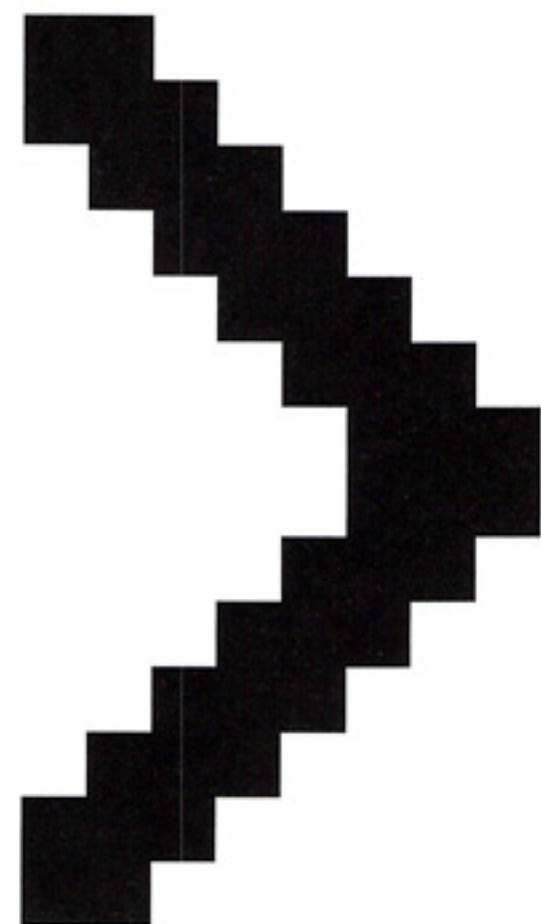
Qutb was hanged in 1966, following a brief taste of freedom after ten long years in prison. Instead of taking the offer to flee Egypt, Qutb chose martyrdom. Now his works, including the equally influential *Milestones* that has gone through 2,000 editions, have become the theoretical justification for jihadist movements, including Al-Qaeda.

There is no **FREEDOM** in the real sense

Clearly, the extremes that Qutb expounded have had unjustifiable and destructive consequences. But as Paul Berman discussed in *The New York Times* in 2004, the core of what Qutb was addressing and offering a solution for was a paradox that many of us feel. There is an uneasiness within Western society that while freedoms and liberties are worth upholding, essential even, a truer life of internal peace can not seem to take root in the systems we, in the West, have in place.

There is something hauntingly familiar about the nucleus of emptiness and dissatisfaction Qutb identifies. As he wrote in *Milestones*, "In a society in which some people are lords who legislate and others are slaves who obey them, there is no freedom in the real sense, nor dignity in the individual."

Elecia Chrunik





1949 — *Seventeen*, one of the first magazines to attempt to directly capitalize on the growing wealth of American teens, celebrates its fifth birthday.

THE CENTURY OF THE SELF

The twentieth century was one of breathless, spectacular, relentless innovation. But we can forget about the horseless carriage, the radio, the polio vaccine, the wireless telephone and the PlayStation. The true triumph of the century was the invention of a whole new way of being — a new imperative of the self.

So, go ahead and express yourself. Be true to yourself. Enjoy yourself. Treat yourself. Find yourself. Spoil yourself. Distinguish yourself.

Love yourself. Get some self-esteem. Some self-worth. A positive self-image. Achieve self-awareness. And self-sufficiency. Do some self-improvement. Some self-exploration. Self-promotion. Self-actualization. Self-help.

Get out there, into the big glittering universe of the self. Measure it out in Me time and MySpace. Welcome to individuality. Population: You.

FREEDOM from
inconvenience



1957 — Siemens Ediswan home telephone.

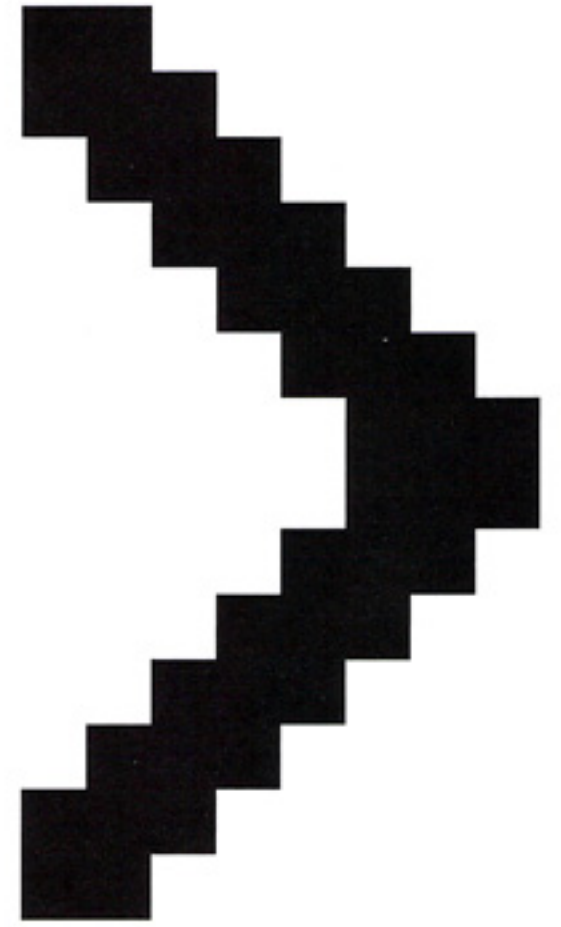
1964—Two US Navy destroyers report being attacked by North Vietnamese torpedo boats in the Gulf of Tonkin. US President Lyndon Johnson uses the attack to pass the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, which allows Johnson to take “all measures necessary” to rapidly escalate the conflict without formally declaring war. Years later, it would be revealed that the attacks reported by the US ships never actually happened.



FREEDOM from limits

1973—President Salvador Allende of Chile is killed in a coup following three years of covert operations and economic sabotage carried out by the CIA. He would be replaced by General Augusto Pinochet, who – despite orchestrating the torture, murder and disappearance of thousands of Chileans – would continue to enjoy US support for years to come.

1979—Following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the CIA arms all factions willing to resist the occupation. Amongst the US-allied factions are the fundamentalist mujahideen, who would eventually use their CIA-funded training and weaponry to consolidate power as the Taliban.

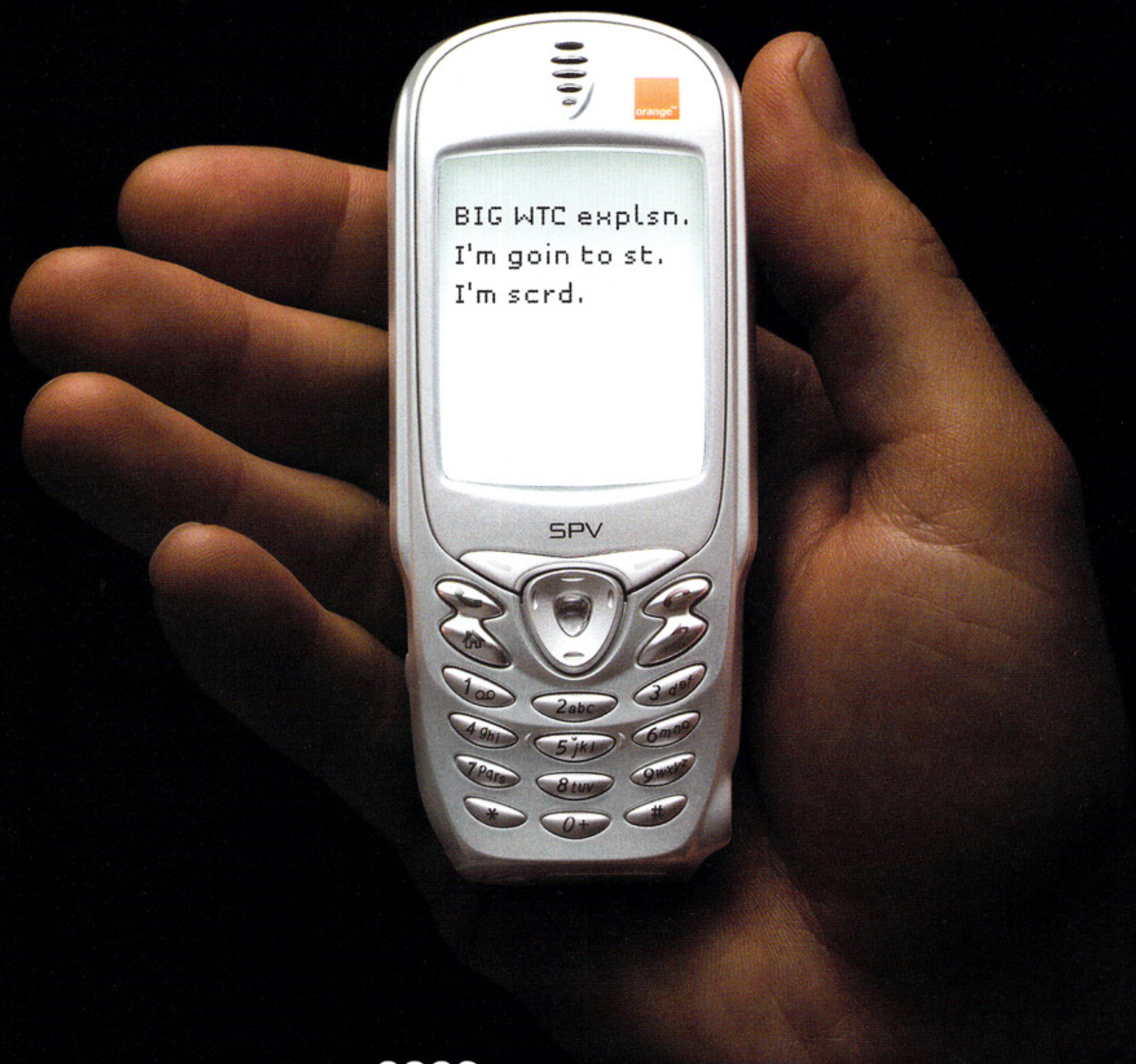


1982 — Nike Air Force 1, the first basketball shoe to use Nike Air technology.



FREEDOM from want

2002 — Orange SPV, the first mobile phone with Windows software.



2003 — Riding a wave of public anger following the September 11, 2001 attacks on New York by Saudi, Emirati, Egyptian and Lebanese nationals, a coalition of countries, led by the United States of America, invades Iraq.

March 2008—Men's Health

FREEDOM
to strike first

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ADBUSTERS 79

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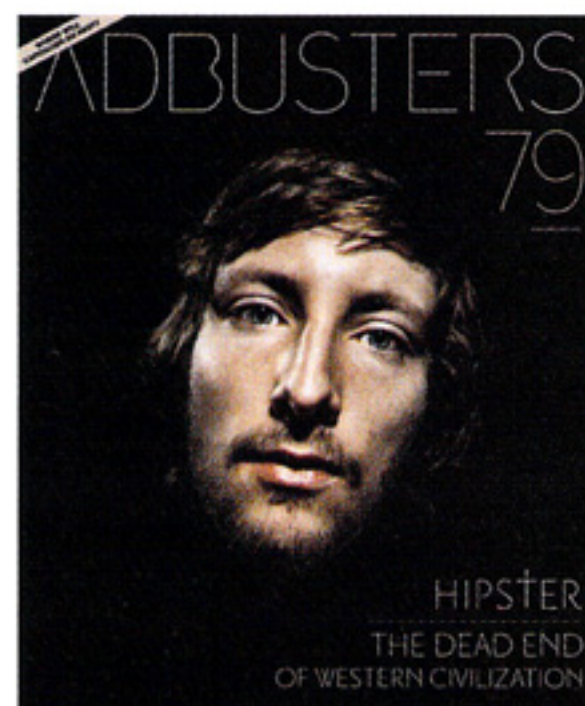
MY BLOOD BOILED when I read "Britain's Great Green Hope" [Adbusters #77]. What a pile of wishy-washy liberal bile. Writer Amber Green is either not living in this country or maybe spending her time in tedious ivory-towered hustings, and has little knowledge of real politics. David Cameron, like Blair, like Thatcher, is a polished spectacle. If elected, he will serve one interest and that is the interests of the money-grabbing, suburban, cocaine fuck-ups and perverts that call themselves businessmen or politicians.

Darren Guy
Liverpool, UK

WITH A RIGHT-WING PRIME MINISTER in power and an awkward and weak opposition leader, the only hope Canada has is for Ignatieff to learn from his fall and rise again" [Derek Hill, Adbusters #77].

WTF!? I read "hope" three times in a row: the first time, the double-take, and a third desperate scan for irony (not that I need any more irony, thanks). Then I read the quoted text aloud to my partner. She laughed. She thought I was joking, like I had hidden another magazine between the covers of Adbusters.

When I am tired of the



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Conservatives, I should flip back to the Liberals? Again, WTF!? Is Canada a two-party state!? Was Adbusters recently acquired by Canwest!?

Chris
via email

I'M SURPRISED NO ONE WROTE in about taking offense to your waterboarding spread in Adbusters #76. Art is a matter of opinion, but should violent acts against real people, regardless of one's taste for them, be promoted under such terms?

RW
via email

I TOOK MICRO AND MACRO ECONOMICS in high school and we used Mankiw's book. Notably, my high school teacher, Josh Bookin, went on to graduate school at Harvard, where he assisted Mankiw there in writing the latest edition of his textbook.

My question for Mankiw is: Do you subscribe to the view of the Third World having "missed the boat?" Having opened up Latin America to direct competition from industrialized markets over the last ten or 15 years, how can we seriously expect them to compete? Do we even want them to compete, is it in our best interests economically for them not to?

Alex Mills
via email

TO ADBUSTERS, JONATHAN BARNBROOK, MICHAEL BIERUT, VINCE FROST, STEVEN HELLER, KALLE LASN, RICK POYNOR AND DMITRI SIEGEL.

I found out about The One Flag Design Competition today and instantly thought it was a great idea. My plan was (and maybe still is) to submit a design. At first I was quite impressed with the list of judges, until it dawned on me that there is not a single

woman on that list. Furthermore, all the judges seem to be white, native English speakers from the US or the British Isles. (Maybe I am wrong here. In that case, I would be more than happy if you could correct me.) Is there a reason for not having a more diverse and international panel of judges? I find it unfortunate when the competition is about embodying the idea of global citizenship.

Jan Olof Nygren
via email

I HAVE JUST FINISHED MY MASTER'S thesis on the social and cultural responsibilities of a graphic designer.

A year ago, Jonathan Barnbrook came to Istanbul for a seminar about his work and design philosophy. I had known his work before but, to tell the truth, I had lost my trust in graphic designers. Unfortunately, they have huge egos. But he was very different, and I learned he doesn't have contradictions between his life and works.

Last month, I subscribed to Adbusters. I got the issue and I have to say I feel like I have found my home. In my daily life, I am an active person in social issues and have been working in an international association. I have known many people who share the same ideas, but I have to say I have found a new fresh breath with Adbusters. It is so important to dedicate life to an idea, to believe in society, to do something for people, to change the world, and of course to change ourselves.

Anil Aykan
Istanbul, Turkey

PLEASE STOP PRINTING LIES ABOUT psychiatric medication in your magazine. Prozac, Zoloft, and Paxil have been shown to work no better than placebos

only for mild to moderate depression. For those of us with severe depressive disorders, our meds are the difference between holding down a job and not being able to get out of bed.

Denying the efficacy of available medication goes beyond flippancy about medical conditions that some of us have to deal with, and enters the territory of giving false hope of life without meds to people dependant on them.

At least acknowledge that the mentally ill have the sense to put up with the side-effects of our meds because, maybe, they might just be doing us some good at the same time.

Bethan Griffiths
Birmingham, UK

I READ, WITH INTEREST, A LETTER to your magazine about how people should seek out the homeless and get to know them better. I have encountered this attitude from many people, and I admire their sense of charity, but people should remember that most of those who are vagrants chose to be that way through their lifestyle.

Every day I work around vagrants and the homeless (the distinction is apt to those who have experience with both), and I have observed that they don't want to be helped. Many will accept a handout (because it's free), but they don't want to be told how to "improve" their lives. Substance abuse, mental illness, and sloth are what compel most of these people to stay away from work and home.

Do I still give change to panhandlers out of my own principle of "blind charity?" Yes. Do I still throw out vagrants from my workplace, as part of my job? Yes. Because if you've actually seen the face of vagrancy, you realize that it is the face of contempt for those



Just spotted: a Coke vending machine robot walking around outside of Shibuya Station in Tokyo. Coca-Cola has oversized robot vending machines lumbering around Tokyo, pinching the heads of people who prefer a different brand.

who have more, as well as the face of unrestrained selfishness.

Benjamin W. McMaster
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

AN ITEM IN THE MAY issue really looked it was written by someone who has never left Canada. I'm all for changing the way information flows, but I can't stand bullshit.

Where do the juices of life flow? Where do families and vibrant communities hang together? You picked the Dharavi slum in Mumbai.

I was there last month on a tour with two Canadians, in fact. We saw a plastic recycling facility. Plastic burning releases

carcinogens into the confined spaces where the employees work, unprotected, because they need the money and none of them know they are destined to get cancer. Most, if not all, have very little education.

The people of India's slums have been abandoned by the government. Dharavi is a laboratory of capitalism — there is always someone willing to do the work for less. Trade unions, concepts of safety at work and health insurance do not exist. Those who can't afford to pay are turned away from hospitals.

The lives of the urban poor in India are marked by precariousness and cruelty. Extreme poverty

and brutality suck the light out of eyes faster than television does. Stress, sleeplessness, alcoholism, depression and violence against women are far more likely in the slums than elsewhere. Virtually none of these conditions are treated.

To imply that Dharavi is a center of noble savagery amongst the sewage and the unwanted junk of the city is hopelessly naive. A way out of the dead end of mindless consumerism will require thinking, education and creativity rather than a return to ignorance and the worst of Victorian society.

Cathal Rabbitte
Mumbai, India

I'M TIRED OF PEOPLE HOLDING UP SLUM life as ideal! *Adbusters* #77 purports that life in the slums is "flourishing" while life in the burbs is "sterile." I moved to Kenya three years ago, and spending many hours tutoring kids in the Dagoretti slum near my house has broken this misconception that I myself held upon arrival.

I understand the point that the massive distance between housing structures in the suburban West, while seeking privacy and safety, only results in alienation and lack of community. However, the proximity and density of slum life can be just as degrading. The closeness of human habitation and sewage makes the slum a "flourishing" place indeed — for hepatitis, typhoid, and cholera. A classroom of 80 children to one underpaid teacher may sound beautifully vibrant to some, but, in truth, it's chaos, the sad result of a corrupt government which spends as much on a fleet of Lexus cars for its ministers as it does on its primary schools.

Yes, life in the slums of Kenya can contain beautiful meal sharing, communal celebration, and interdependence, but we have to see the full picture lest we designate life in poverty as desirable. Imagine the children of the

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household who are wakened each night to the sound of their parent's intercourse in the same bed, and you may see that the slums of this world are in need of some of the gross privacy and consumption that characterize the West.

Simon C
Nairobi, Kenya

TODAY, WHEN I HEAR POLITICIANS say that "all options are on the table for dealing with Iran," my heart threatens to explode. We must not allow the wanton murder of another people, another culture and another community.

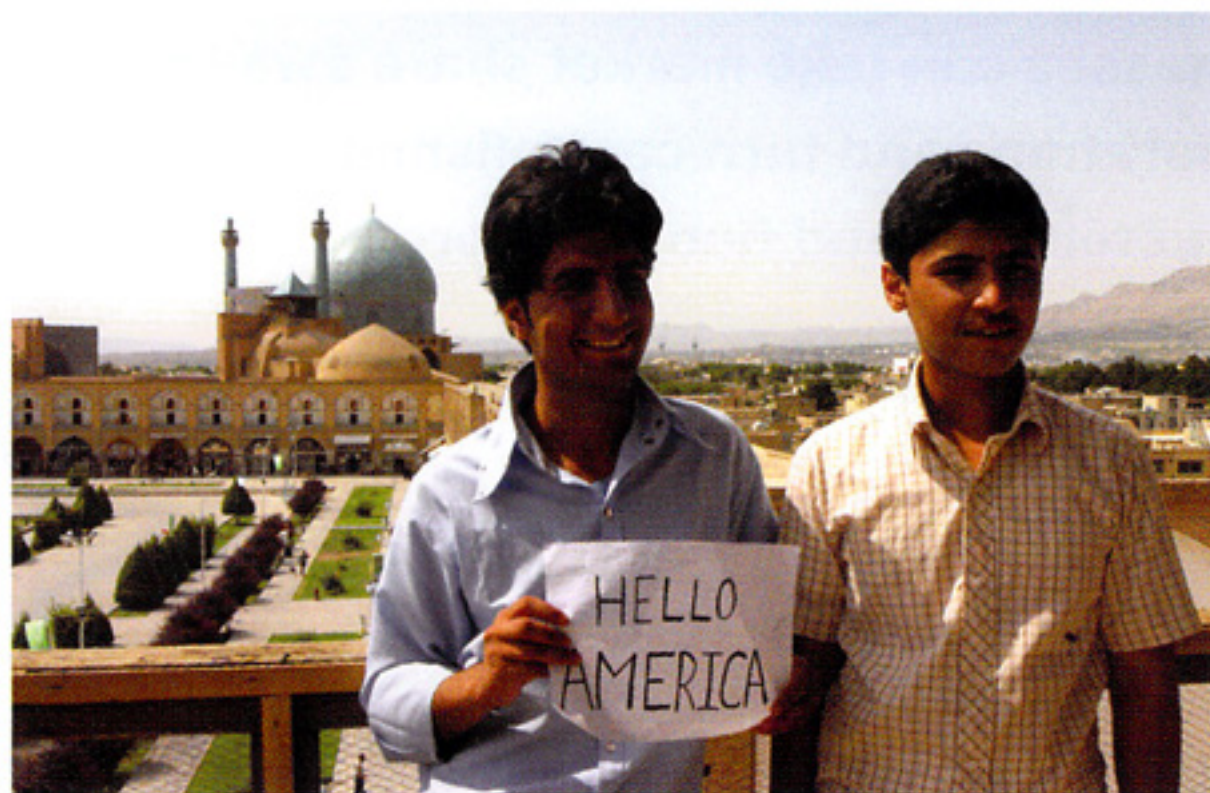
As the hawkish debate on the Iran Question continues to possess Washington, most Americans' exposure to the country is limited to photos of a bespectacled, bearded Supreme Leader and an unshaven, uncouth firebrand of a President. It's little wonder that playing word-association games with Iran is child's fodder in the West: hijackings, terrorists, oppression, misogynists, extremists, veils, theocracy, Ayatollahs, anti-Zionists and reactionaries.

Iran is a vibrant society of millions of people. It is a country where women outnumber men in universities; where the second largest Jewish community in the Middle East resides; where politics is vigorously and openly debated in the streets; where domestic

films wow international audiences; where transsexuals are permitted to have sex-change operations by the decree of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini himself; where the official dress code is very strict but often only followed in its loosest interpretation; where illegal satellites are ubiquitous and openly displayed on rooftops; where the government actively encourages contraception as a means of family planning and provides one of the only condom factories in the Middle East; where downhill skiing is a popular winter recreation in the Zagros Mountains; and, where family picnics are a favorite summer pastime in verdant gardens. It is a country where a lone American traveler, such as myself, is warmly embraced by complete strangers who are eager to serve an endless flow of steamy chai and Persian snacks.

Deena Guzder
New York, USA

OVER TEN YEARS AGO I packed my bags and went to South Korea as an English teacher, something that was more original then than it is now. One of the few things that I brought with me from my old life was an article that I razored out of *Adbusters*. The article was lost during my travels and while I can't remember the exact words, the spirit has never left me.



ADBUSTERS STAFF PICKS



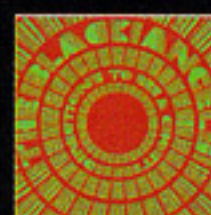
STUFF AND STARVED: MARKETS, POWER AND THE HIDDEN BATTLE FOR THE WORLD'S FOOD SYSTEM
BY RAJ PATEL

Raj Patel lays bare the inadequacies and inequalities of the global food system, calling obesity and starvation two sides of the same coin. Linking the world in way that is personal and maybe a little scary, it's a good book for anyone who wants to take the plunge to understand what goes into our bodies and why.



TINARIWEN
AMAN IMAN

The band was born 25 years ago of the exiled Saharan Touareg tribe. Tinariwen is just starting to gain recognition in the West for their rich talent in the Tishourmaren, or "music of the unemployed," style. Sung in French and Tamashek, the songs encompass their history with a sound best described as modern desert blues.



THE BLACK ANGELS
DIRECTIONS TO SEE A GHOST

The Black Angels latest album feels like a trip through heaven and hell. Psychedelic rock for modern times, the Black Angel's musical "quest for pure sanity" challenges the listener to alter his mental state, thereby altering his outlook on life.



THE BATTLE OF ALGIERS

This 1966 film was recognized for its intense and realistic depiction of events from the Algerian War of Independence. It strives to maintain a neutral voice on the atrocities of war from all sides, which caused it to be banned from France for five years. It gained new currency when the Pentagon screened it in 2003 to open up discussion on how to deal with the Iraqi invasion.



THE SINGING REVOLUTION

Estonia, like all Soviet satellite states, couldn't bear the occupation forever. But instead of armed conflict, this Baltic country fought back with song. The Singing Revolution follows the small but determined population, starting in 1987, as it found strength in gathering to sing forbidden nationalistic songs to rally for independence.

After graduating from university with a BA, my dream was to return for a Master's, but I was caught in the recession of the early 1990s and it was too great of a financial hardship to continue. The article that I clipped from *Adbusters* was about creating your own curriculum for graduate study and creatively exploiting the opportunities presented everyday for continuing growth, development and education. The central idea is to get out of your comfort zone, to do things that you would never think of doing otherwise. For example, it encouraged one to go to a Catholic church one Sunday and a radical Protestant one the next; to play tennis with WASPs one day and basketball in the inner city the next. This is what I carried in my suitcase when I went to Korea.

I have spent the past decade plus following that philosophy, first in Korea and beyond. I have looked for opportunities and got

used to saying "yes" when my instincts said "no." As a result, I have had many diverse and unique experiences, and, yes, learned a lot about the world, but mostly about myself, which is true education. In the process, limitations and neuroses and self-doubts diminished. Not everything has been a wonderful or positive experience. Mistakes have been made, time wasted, money misspent, energies misdirected, but I can't say that I made the same mistake twice: I keep making new mistakes. But such is life.

So, I'm back and I see *Adbusters* is still on the stands, and I just want to add my voice to the chorus and say it doesn't matter what you consume, only what you do.

Tony Blackmore
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

IN BELATED RESPONSE TO YOUR the "Reconquest of Cool" issue [*Adbusters*, #76], I've found my own cool. I've thrown away

my television and planted a veg-patch for the summer. What more do you need?

Sal
Cornwall, UK

MY GIRLFRIEND AND I ARE doing a month-long "buy nothing" project. No shopping on eBay, at big-box retailers, etc. We're buying local farmer's market food when we can, and eating out only at local, family-owned spots.

Yesterday, we got hours of enjoyment with our TV-B-Gone in a mall. I shut down all the big screens in the Sony store, while proudly wearing my Blackspots, and my girl killed all the monitors in a JC Penny.

Our next adventure is to shut off the wall of TVs in a Best Buy.

Jay
via email

I ANTICIPATED GOING HOME ALL THROUGH my work day.

I fantasized about the variety of quality events I'd fill my new, clear evenings with. I would finally achieve fulfillment by doing all the things I'd been robbed of. I'd find the bliss of an evening with my dreams instead of television dramas.

So I came home and cleaned.

I scoured the stove top. I bleached the work tops. I did all the washing – even the socks that had become fused to the bottom of the clothes basket.

And I was scared.

Terrified that I would run out of mundane chores and the evening would stretch out in its full eight-hour glory and I would have NOTHING TO DO.

I would be bored.

I wouldn't be able to amuse myself because that part of me had atrophied a long time ago.

It had died and I hadn't even noticed.

That's what I wrote on the second night of Mental Detox Week,

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which would turn into two, then three. Now we're mostly TV-free for three months!

Dianna Langley
Reading, UK

I RECENTLY MOVED TO VANCOUVER AND find myself in one of the most beautiful residential neighborhoods. I often go for walks in the evening through the short streets thick with oaks that bow over the road, hemming in the pedestrians and drivers.

The other night the most unusual thing happened. I saw no televisions through windows and heard no car radios. It was silent, and, like the silence before a storm, it was thick and full of heart. A moment later, a man walking about a block behind me, hidden by leafy branches and under the cover of night, began to sing opera.

Suddenly everything changed: one could no longer dwell on things frivolous but could only be swept up by this stranger's robust, melodic tenor. The leaves were listening. The night was listening. I was listening. His voice filling the street offered wholeness and oneness.

We might find this strange or inappropriate. How easily we tend to hide behind and define ourselves by socially acceptable

behavior. How quick we are to judge. I once visited a European city where people sang at the top of their voices while riding their bicycles. The air was always full of singing.

driven are the most important moments of all?

Shari-Anne Gibson
Vancouver, British
Columbia, Canada



Perhaps these moments of strangeness sustain our spirit and remind us that we are radiant and diverse. Nearly every day we listen when we are addressed as customers and consumers. Maybe we can start listening to the poets on the street, the child who has a secret, the mysterious stranger who sings La Traviata.

How can we forget that these moments that are not market-

WHEN I CAME TO THE piece by Ryan Ledoux in Adbusters #77, I was floored. I love that other people think that way, because when you're all alone, it feels pretty grotesque.

The feeling of sitting beside the grave of a loved one, wanting nothing more than to dig them out and hold them again, see them again, knowing that they still look the same, that their empty shell still

exists — it's awful. We are supposed to celebrate and remember the life they had, when all that's left is the tombstone. Anyone who ventures into a cemetery doesn't see graves and think of people — they think of corpses. The accomplishments and achievements of all of those people are overshadowed by the simple fact that they died.

If, 70 years down the road, anyone who sees a tombstone will only remember a name and a date, what is the point of self-preservation? If we truly want to be remembered, and truly want to leave a legacy, it'll be in that actions we take during our lives.

Katie
via email

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Coming in Adbusters 80 & 81

80 HOW TO LIVE A GOOD LIFE—
The creative non-fiction issue
Out mid-September.

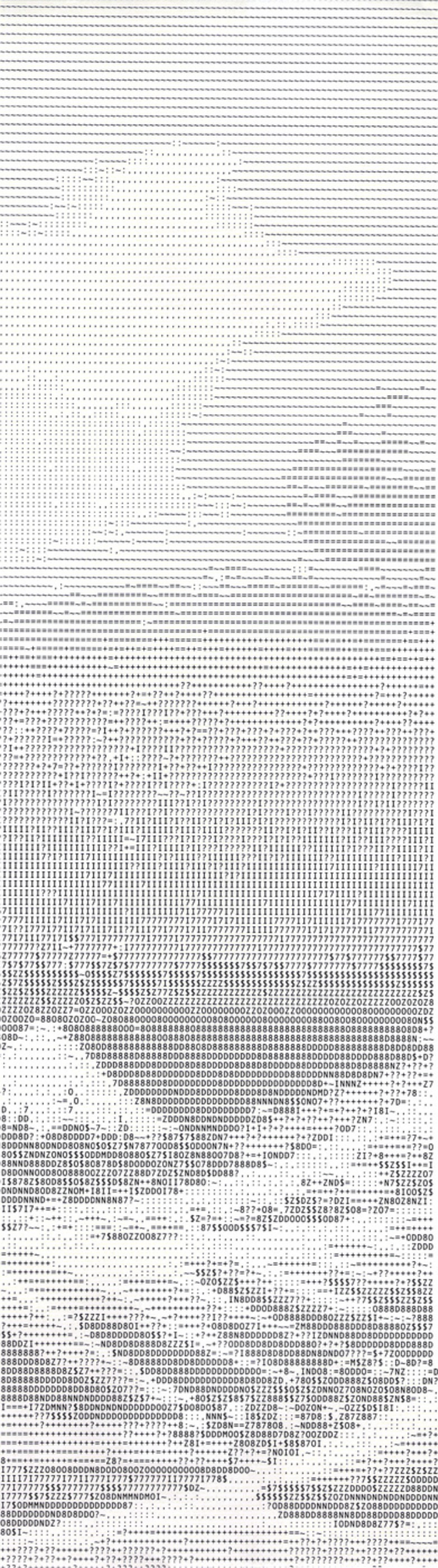
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FOUR WAVES OF ANGST





Space Race

Still reveling in a newfound sense of post-WWII confidence, America’s morale was dealt a crushing blow when the Soviet Union launched the Sputnik 1 satellite in 1957 – not only because it appeared that the Soviets were technologically superior, but because space exploration was as much about the ideological fight happening on Earth as it was the race to space.

With tensions escalating between the Cold War foes, it appeared as though communism might actually triumph. However, the heavily funded US space program would soon catch up to the Soviets and eventually pass them when it put a man on the moon in 1969. America’s victory in the Space Race reassured the US that it was the most advanced and powerful nation in the world.

Vietnam

With soldiers coming home in body bags by the hundreds and images of brutal massacres filling television screens, the Vietnam War forced Americans to grapple with the horrors they were inflicting overseas.

Suddenly, America was losing. Suddenly, Nixon was lying. Suddenly, there was an oil crisis. At the height of the nation’s cultural prowess, the Vietnam War unraveled America’s vision of itself as the beacon of the Free World. The Vietnam War was a humiliating defeat for America. Morale hit rock bottom and confidence was shattered. The US went into a period of somber reflection that many wondered if it would ever recover from.

Japan

After suffering through a decade of self-doubt, America emerged out of its shadow of uncertainty in the 1980s with an explosive economy. But just as it was reasserting itself, Japanese companies started snapping up American institutions. First, it was Columbia Pictures. Then, the Rockefeller Centre. Then, MCA. Americans became consumed with fear that Japan would buy up the United States and become the most powerful economy in the world.

But the challenge actually helped reinvigorate stagnant American industries and sparked a new technological and financial boom. A reinvigorated America regained its confidence and remained the world’s most dominant economy for another decade.

9/11

When foreign fighters flew into the World Trade Center, America’s confidence was shaken to the core. But instead of reinventing itself once again, America has come undone.

Today, the US is bogged down in a war that is both unpopular and unwinnable. Its economy is on the verge of collapse. Washington is paralyzed with calcified politics and unable to create a sustainable energy policy, break its addiction to debt or stop antagonizing foreign foes.

But for the first time, America cannot point the finger at an identifiable enemy. For the first time, America must come to terms with the fact that this is a self-inflicted crisis. The question now is whether America can survive this latest challenge and remain one of the world’s most dominant powers, or whether its confidence has finally been broken for good.

BEGGING FOR MORE



Dear Adbusters,

This advertisement, on the back of one of Holland's leading newspapers, *de Volkskrant*, caught my attention. The text read: "If you are responsible for 20 percent of CO₂ emissions, then take your responsibility seriously."

What would happen if advertising, genuinely and dynamically, began to side with climate change activists? And if it helped set the wheels in motion for the urgently needed worldwide waking up? Is this a sign of hope that culture jammers are getting their message across in the media? Of course, being environmental is chic these days. So maybe this is business as usual, marketing toying with the trends of the day.

Chris Champion

TWO YEARS AGO, IN HIS ANNUAL STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS, President Bush chastised America for its raging addiction to foreign oil. In the stern language of a disapproving patriarch, Bush let it be known that he intended to address the growing problem before his tenure was up.

Now, with only a few scant months of his presidency remaining, Bush has finally unveiled his energy plan. After begging and barely getting the Saudis to pump more oil, he is attempting to strong-arm Congress into lifting the ban on offshore drilling. Bush's plan, which would cause untold environmental damage, will only yield enough oil to support our current level of consumption for two-and-a-half years. And were the drilling to start tomorrow, it wouldn't become available in the market for at least a decade.

Some plan.

So why didn't Bush start by suggesting that Americans drive less, drive slower or stop driving altogether? Why didn't he urge funding for alternative fuel research or push for a carbon tax?

The reason is because, in addition to being the most inept leader this country has ever known, Bush is an oil man.

We never had a chance.

Seven years of Bush policy has left America crushed by debt, stuck in Iraq and isolated from the rest of the world. Bush will undoubtedly be remembered by history as the straw that broke the empire's back.

And yet, despite it all, the man himself seems to be faring well. Displaying the unflinching gusto for which he's famous, Bush's inner fortitude is nothing short of a phenomenon.

Despite his litany of flaws, I admire Bush for his unwavering sense of self-confidence. I am in awe of whatever force — be it will or ignorance — that shields him from the onslaught of public opinion. Still, sometime before the sun sets on his presidency, I'd like to see someone confront him for his crimes. I'd like to see a reporter, a citizen or a disillusioned war veteran hold him accountable for the destruction his administration has wrought. I'd like someone to make him answer for the million people who have died on his watch or the eco-crisis he has left woefully unaddressed. But most of all, in front of the blazing lights of media cameras, I'd like to see someone wipe that smirk off his goddamn face.

Kono Matsu

KARSTEN THORMAEHLEN, CB HIGH HEEL,
C-PRINT, 2001, STUDIO-55.DE, COURTESY
MOONBLINX GALLERY, MOONBLINX.COM



2001 — Prototype for a fashion-forward shoe line by Christian Birkenstock. The line was never produced.



PETER GRONQUIST
PETERGRONQUIST.COM

VERSACE M60

SOLD
\$ 3,500

Who knew a rifle could make such a great fashion accessory? While violence can often be in vogue, Peter Gronquist's exhibition of stylized designer weapons play with our throbbing, eroticized notions of materialism, violence and power.

A gold-plated Chanel rocket launcher, a Burberry plaid automatic weapon and a Versace encrusted machine gun all give the patina of legitimacy for government sanctioned

war profiteering. But when Louis Vuitton saw it's iconic LV plastered over an electric chair and a rifle, they issued the Oakland-based artist with a cease and desist order, barring the exhibition or publication of any of the artist's work that bears the company's trademarked logo. Apparently, fascism also makes a great fashion accessory.

BLACKWATER'S IMPUNITY

IT WASN'T SO VERY LONG AGO THAT BLACKWATER'S DAYS APPEARED TO BE NUMBERED.

The US-based private military security firm had its license to operate in Iraq revoked last September, a day after a group of its employees killed 17 apparently unarmed civilians in Baghdad. The Nissour Square massacre, as it came to be called, remains the war's single most deadly incident involving a private contractor, not to mention a major public relations nightmare for security contractors in general. The Iraqi Interior Ministry called it cold-blooded murder. The FBI agreed that at least 14 of the victims had been killed without cause. Even the US Army issued a report referring to the killings as a criminal event.

And yet, barely a week after the massacre, Blackwater's license was restored. As the company rolled out a more respectable, less bloodthirsty logo, its spokespeople made appearances to assure everyone that the responsible employees would be prosecuted. And then, despite the ongoing criminal investigation, Blackwater's Iraq contract was renewed by the US State Department in April of this year. So, far from withering, Blackwater appears to be thriving and expanding, in no small part thanks to the ongoing support of the US government.

Seeing as how the company's executives have made little secret of being dyed-in-the-wool Republican supporters, it

might be tempting to predict the swift end of Blackwater's Iraq party come November's presidential elections. But the possibility of a Democrat in the White House doesn't necessarily mean the end of for-profit armies.

The issue is simply one of numbers. There are currently an estimated 180,000 contract employees operating in Iraq, of which 70,000 are believed to work for private military security. At the same time, American troops in the country number somewhere in the region of 150,000. Considering the trouble that US forces are already having in keeping a lid on insurgent violence, what would happen if the number of personnel at their disposal were abruptly slashed by a third?

Put the money and influence of war contractors aside, and you still have an explanation for why Barack Obama, the presumed Democratic Party presidential candidate, has refused to rule out the use of private military security. Like a small townner who swears off Wal-Mart only to discover that there's nowhere else left to shop, the US government now finds itself in the absurd position of having no other options — a captive consumer in a war of its own making.

Mikhail Onusko

A MODERN TUPPERWARE TALE

IN MY MOTHER'S DAY IT WAS TUPPERWARE. She would come home — tipsy and smelling vaguely of cigarettes — her arms full of stackable plastic kitchen ware. I watched transfixed as she unloaded the tiny green containers into which she planned to pack snacks for my lunch, the day-glo orange Jell-O mold, the translucent ice tray that she said would be perfect for making little apple juice popsicles. Each time one of her friends threw a party, I waited for her in the kitchen — anxious to see what new shapes and colors she would pull from the box. A few years ago, my mother told me she never actually gave a shit about Tupperware. She just wanted to drink some wine, smoke a cigarette and be away from her family for a while. In those days, she said with a trace of bitterness, it was inconceivable that a woman might want a little time for herself.

Someone had given me the invitation at work. 'This ain't yo' momma's Tupperware Party!', it read above a stylized drawing of a woman wearing a red bandana, arms crossed and lips pursed with attitude. "You've heard about these taser parties, right?" said my co-worker, peering over the top of my cubicle. "They're all the rage. You're coming, right? Everybody's going to be there."

I thought about my mother as I sat on the couch — wondering if my fellow party-goers were merely feigning bloodlust so as to have an excuse to get out of the house for a while. "Take that, fucker," said the middle age brunette as she pulled the trigger, stomping a high heel for emphasis. The others made high pitched hooting sounds as two electric probes sank into the target at the end of the hall.

"Whoooo!" yelled the brunette before turning to mug for the crowd, wittily striking a Charlie's Angels pose. No, they weren't feigning anything. This was for real. "My turn! I want to go!" The blonde woman next to me sprang from her seat and bounded over to the table where the tasers were displayed. As she deliberated over the variety of available colors and patterns (Hot Pink, Fierce Leopard...), I tentatively raised my hand. The company spokesperson, an impossibly tanned woman with the word 'Tasergirl' emblazoned across her chest in sequins, pointed at me and smiled. "Why all the different colors?" I asked. "I mean, if the point is to protect yourself, who cares what the thing looks like?" I could feel the eyes of the party's hostess boring into the side of my skull from across the room. "No, it's alright — it's a fair question," said Tasergirl convivially before placing her hands on her hips and turning to address the entire room. "At Tasergirl International," she began, "your personal safety is our number one concern. Making sure you look fabulous? Well, that's a close second!" The women cackled their appreciation.

As I walked out alone into the night, unprotected and unfabulous, I thought about my mother again. I thought about how I would've seen the world if, instead of storage containers, she'd come home from parties with the newest in allegedly non-lethal personal security technology. And as the sounds of the women's hoots and laughter grew fainter in the distance, I wondered who was at home waiting for them.

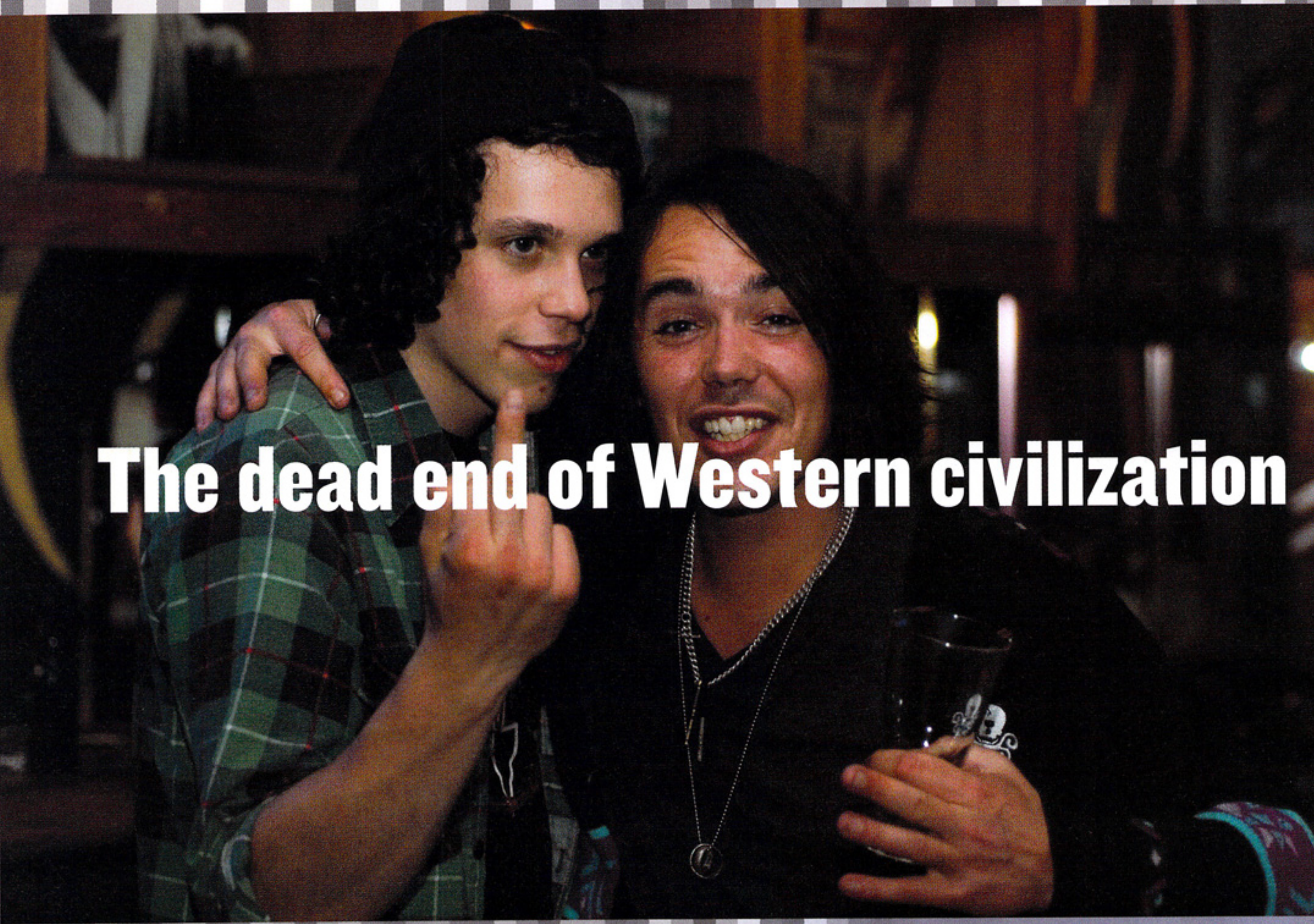
Sarah Nardi



BULLETPROOF

The idea for bulletproof clothing was born in Colombia. In a nation riddled with violence wrought by the Medellin drug cartel, there was no shortage of need. Hugo Chávez is rumored to be a client. So is Prince Philip of Spain. Steven Seagal reportedly ordered a custom-made bulletproof kimono. But now most of Miguel Caballero's clientele are in Mexico, where 1,400 people have been killed in drug-related shootings this year alone. His boutique, newly opened in one of Mexico City's poshest neighborhoods, offers impenetrable personal protection in the form of bulletproof business suits, T-shirts and leather biker jackets. Though prices start at \$2,000, Caballero swears he doesn't sell to the bad guys. Only those honest, law abiding citizens with pockets full of cash and reason to fear for their lives.

Sarah Nardi



The dead end of Western civilization

by Douglas Haddow

Photos by Jordan Todd & Douglas Haddow



We've reached a point in our civilization where counterculture has mutated into a self-obsessed aesthetic vacuum. So while hipsterdom is the end product of all prior countercultures, it's been stripped of its subversion and originality, and is leaving a generation pointlessly obsessing over fashion, faux individuality, cultural capital and the commodities of style.



HIPSTER

I'm sipping a scummy pint of cloudy beer in the back of a trendy dive bar turned nightclub in the heart of the city's heroin district. In front of me stand a gang of hippiesh grunge-punk types, who crowd around each other and collectively scoff at the smoking laws by sneaking puffs of "fuck-you," reveling in their perceived rebellion as the haggard, staggering staff look on without the slightest concern.

The "DJ" is keystroking a selection of MP3s off his MacBook, making a mix that sounds like he took a hatchet to a collection of yesteryear billboard hits, from DMX to Dolly Parton, but mashed up with a jittery techno backbeat.

"So... this is a hipster party?" I ask the girl sitting next to me. She's wearing big dangling earrings, an American

Apparel V-neck tee, non-prescription eyeglasses and an inappropriately warm wool coat.

"Yeah, just look around you, 99 percent of the people here are total hipsters!"

"Are you a hipster?"

"Fuck no," she says, laughing back the last of her glass before she hops off to the dance floor.

Ever since the Allies bombed the Axis into submission, Western civilization has had a succession of counter-culture movements that have energetically challenged the status quo. Each successive decade of the post-war era has seen it smash social standards, riot and fight to revolutionize every aspect of music, art, government and civil society.

But after punk was plasticized and hip hop lost its impetus for social

change, all of the formerly dominant streams of "counter-culture" have merged together. Now, one mutating, trans-Atlantic melting pot of styles, tastes and behavior has come to define the generally indefinable idea of the "Hipster."

An artificial appropriation of different styles from different eras, the hipster represents the end of Western civilization — a culture lost in the superficiality of its past and unable to create any new meaning. Not only is it unsustainable, it is suicidal. While previous youth movements have challenged the dysfunction and decadence of their elders, today we have the "hipster" — a youth subculture that mirrors the doomed shallowness of mainstream society.

Take a stroll down the street in any major North American or European city and you'll be sure to see a speckle of fashion-conscious twentysomethings hanging about and sporting a number of predictable stylistic trademarks: skinny jeans, cotton spandex leggings, fixed-gear bikes, vintage flannel, fake eyeglasses and a keffiyeh — initially sported by Jewish students and Western protesters to express solidarity with Palestinians, the keffiyeh has become a completely meaningless hipster cliché fashion accessory.

The American Apparel V-neck shirt, Pabst Blue Ribbon beer and Parliament cigarettes are symbols and icons of working or revolutionary classes that have been appropriated by hipsterdom and drained of meaning. Ten years ago, a man wearing

a plain V-neck tee and drinking a Pabst would never be accused of being a trend-follower. But in 2008, such things have become shameless clichés of a class of individuals that seek to escape their own wealth and privilege by immersing themselves in the aesthetic of the working class.

This obsession with “street-cred” reaches its apex of absurdity as hipsters have recently and wholeheartedly adopted the fixed-gear bike as the only acceptable form of transportation — only to have brakes installed on a piece of machinery that is defined by its lack thereof.

Lovers of apathy and irony, hipsters are connected through a global network of blogs and shops that push forth a global vision of fashion-informed aesthetics. Loosely associated with some form of creative output,

they attend art parties, take lo-fi pictures with analog cameras, ride their bikes to night clubs and sweat it up at nouveau disco-coke parties. The hipster tends to religiously blog about their daily exploits, usually while leafing through generation-defining magazines like *Vice*, *Another Magazine* and *Wallpaper*. This cursory and stylized lifestyle has made the hipster almost universally loathed.

“These hipster zombies... are the idols of the style pages, the darlings of viral marketers and the marks of predatory real-estate agents,” wrote Christian Lorentzen in a *Time Out New York* article entitled ‘Why the Hipster Must Die.’ “And they must be buried for cool to be reborn.”

With nothing to defend, uphold or even embrace, the idea of “hipsterdom” is left wide open for attack. And



yet, it is this ironic lack of authenticity that has allowed hipsterdom to grow into a global phenomenon that is set to consume the very core of Western counterculture. Most critics make a point of attacking the hipster's lack of individuality, but it is this stubborn obfuscation that distinguishes them from their predecessors, while allowing hipsterdom to easily blend in and mutate other social movements, subcultures and lifestyles.

Standing outside an art-party next to a neat row of locked-up fixed-gear bikes, I come across a couple girls who

exemplify hipster homogeneity. I ask one of the girls if her being at an art party and wearing fake eyeglasses, leggings and a flannel shirt makes her a hipster.

"I'm not comfortable with that term," she replies.

Her friend adds, with just a flicker of menace in her eyes, "Yeah, I don't know, you shouldn't use that word, it's just..."

"Offensive?"

"No... it's just, well... if you don't know why then you just shouldn't even use it."

"Ok, so what are you girls doing tonight after this party?"

"Ummm... *We're* going to the after-party."

Gavin McInnes, one of the founders of *Vice*, who recently left the magazine, is considered to be one of hipsterdom's primary architects. But, in contrast to the majority of concerned media-types, McInnes, whose "Dos and Don'ts" commentary defined the rules of hipster fashion for over a decade, is more critical of those doing the criticizing.

"I've always found that word ["hipster"] is used with such disdain, like it's always used by chubby bloggers





who aren't getting laid anymore and are bored, and they're just so mad at these young kids for going out and getting wasted and having fun and being fashionable," he says. "I'm dubious of these hypotheses because they always smell of an agenda."

Punks wear their tattered threads and studded leather jackets with honor, priding themselves on their innovative and cheap methods of self-expression and rebellion. B-boys and b-girls announce themselves to anyone within earshot with baggy gear

and boomboxes. But it is rare, if not impossible, to find an individual who will proclaim himself a proud hipster. It's an odd dance of self-identity — adamantly denying your existence while wearing clearly defined symbols that proclaims it.

"He's 17 and he lives for the scene!" a girl whispers in my ear as I sneak a photo of a young kid dancing up against a wall in a dimly lit corner of the after-party. He's got a flipped-

out, do-it-yourself haircut, skin-tight jeans, leather jacket, a vintage punk tee and some popping high tops.

"Shoot me," he demands, walking up, cigarette in mouth, striking a pose and exhaling. He hits a few different angles with a firmly unimpressed expression and then gets a bit giddy when I show him the results.

"Rad, thanks," he says, re-focusing on the music and submerging himself back into the sweaty funk of the crowd where he resumes a jittery head bobble with a little bit of a twitch.



The dance floor at a hipster party looks like it should be surrounded by quotation marks. While punk, disco and hip hop all had immersive, intimate and energetic dance styles that liberated the dancer from his/her mental states – be it the head-spinning b-boy or violent thrashings of a live punk show – the hipster has more of a joke dance. A faux shrug shuffle that mocks the very idea of dancing or, at its best, illustrates a non-committal fear of expression typified in a weird twitch/ironic twist. The dancers are too self-aware to let themselves feel any form of liberation; they shuffle along, shrugging themselves into oblivion.

Perhaps the true motivation behind this deliberate nonchalance is an attempt to attract the attention of the ever-present party photographers, who swim through the crowd like neon sharks, flashing little blasts of phosphorescent ecstasy whenever they spot someone worth momentarily immortalizing.

Noticing a few flickers of light splash out from the club bathroom, I peep in only to find one such photographer taking part in an impromptu soft-core porno shoot. Two girls and a guy are taking off their clothes and striking poses for a set of grimy glamour shots. It's all grins and smirks until another girl pokes her head inside and screeches, "You're not some club kid in New York in the nineties. This shit is so hipster!" – which sparks a bit of a catfight, causing me to beat a hasty retreat.

In many ways, the lifestyle promoted by hipsterdom is highly ritualized. Many of the party-goers who are subject to the photoblogger's snapshots no doubt crawl out of bed the next afternoon and immediately re-experience the previous night's debauchery. Red-eyed and bleary,

they sit hunched over their laptops, wading through a sea of similarity to find their own (momentarily) thrilling instant of perfected hipster-ness.

What they may or may not know is that "cool-hunters" will also be skulking the same sites, taking note of how they dress and what they consume. These marketers and party-promoters get paid to co-opt youth culture and then re-sell it back at a profit. In the end, hipsters are sold what they think they invent and are spoon-fed their pre-packaged cultural livelihood.

Hipsterdom is the first "counter-culture" to be born under the advertising industry's microscope, leaving it open to constant manipulation but also forcing its participants to continually shift their interests and affiliations. Less a subculture, the hipster is a consumer group – using their capital to purchase empty authenticity and rebellion. But the moment a trend, band, sound, style or feeling gains too much exposure, it is suddenly looked upon with disdain. Hipsters cannot afford to maintain any cultural loyalties or affiliations for fear they will lose relevance.

An amalgamation of its own history, the youth of the West are left with consuming cool rather than creating it. The cultural zeitgeists of the past have always been sparked by furious indignation and are reactionary movements. But the hipster's self-involved and isolated maintenance does nothing to feed cultural evolution. Western civilization's well has run dry. The only way to avoid hitting the colossus of societal failure that looms over the horizon is for the kids to abandon this vain existence and start over.

"If you don't give a damn, we don't give a fuck!" chants an emcee before his incitements are abruptly cut short when the power plug is pulled and the lights snapped on.



Dawn breaks and the last of the after-after-parties begin to spill into the streets. The hipsters are falling out, rubbing their eyes and scanning the surrounding landscape for the way back from which they came. Some hop on their fixed-gear bikes, some call for cabs, while a few of us hop a fence and cut through the industrial wasteland of a nearby condo development.

The half-built condos tower above us like foreboding monoliths of our yuppie futures. I take a look at one of the girls wearing a bright pink keffiyah and carrying a Polaroid camera and think, "If only we carried rocks instead of cameras, we'd look like revolutionaries." But instead we ignore the weapons that lie at our feet – oblivious to our own impending demise.

We are a lost generation, desperately clinging to anything that feels real, but too afraid to become it ourselves. We are a defeated generation, resigned to the hypocrisy of those before us, who once sang songs of rebellion and now sell them back to us. We are the last generation, a culmination of all previous things, destroyed by the vapidness that surrounds us. The hipster represents the end of Western civilization – a culture so detached and disconnected that it has stopped giving birth to anything new.

Douglas Haddow was born and raised in the interior of British Columbia, amidst the snowy peaks of the Selkirk Mountains. When he was 12 years old, he took a hard fall off his bicycle and hit his head on the concrete, waking up two hours later only to realize what he wanted to do with his life. He now lives in Vancouver and works as a magazine journalist.





DANIELLE LEVITT / K8 HARDY

WE GREW UP TOO COMFORTABLE TO TAKE RISKS



By now, the images associated with Japan's global pop hipster juggernaut are news to no one. Pokemon, launched in 1996, is a multibillion-dollar media empire, extending into 68 countries worldwide. Its bright yellow, perky-tailed mascot soars above 5th Avenue in the annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade, right next to an old pup named Snoopy. Fashion-fanatic Harajuku girls are now called "the Harajuku Girls," a Japanese dance troupe touring the world and gyrating in sold-out stadiums alongside a blonde singer named Gwen Stefani. Hello Kitty manufacturer Sanrio's overseas outlets frequently outperform their domestic counterparts, and anime- and manga-devoted clubs and conventions have sprouted and bloomed in foreign soils like Takashi Murakami's psychedelic smiley-faced flowers.

Much of the imagery is redolent of *kawaii*, either emitting a whiff of the uber-cuteness now considered an essence of Japanese popular culture, or, as in the case of Murakami and other contemporary artists, playfully subverting it. There is also a giddy smorgasbord of styles and designs, mixing high and low and East and West with seemingly endless imaginative abandon – and, of course, plenty of hyperkinetic action: spiky-haired guys and gals à la Naruto and Dragon Ball Z and a heap of video game consoles leaping across screens and bursting through comic book panels.

The combined effect of this assault on the global consciousness is a vision of a contemporary Japan exploding with energy, inventiveness, color and light – qualities we generally ascribe to youthfulness: actually being young, or perpetually feeling that way. Many foreigners see in today's Japan the face of the future.

But inside the country, specters of darker hues shadow the horizon: an aging population and a declining or stagnant birthrate; an expanding class of young, part-time workers (freeters) with checkered resumes and scant skills; and so-called NEETs ("Not in Employment, Education or Training"), with their CVs and skill sets suspended in mid-youth. Stories of pathological young shut-ins (hikikomori), who withdraw into their bedrooms and virtual worlds to avoid the real one, and internet suicide pacts, through which young loners meet one another online in order to kill themselves in the bricks-and-mortar world, have begun haunting headlines at home and abroad.

"There doesn't seem to be much optimism," says literary translator, author and University of Tokyo professor Motoyuki Shibata. Shibata's current classes are made up of what he calls "the first generation in modern Japan to grow up without the sense that things would get better."

"We're the risk-averse generation," a 20-year-old female student at the University of Tokyo explained to me. "We grew up too comfortable to take risks."

While conducting research for my book *Japanamerica*, I found that the social ills afflicting Japan's younger generations and the pessimism they betray began to form a narrative nexus, tying an increasingly anemic youth culture to the anxieties felt by many in the anime, manga, toy, game and other pop cultural industries.

It's not hard to find pessimism about the young pessimists. Michael Arias, the Japan-based American director of the 2006 anime feature *Tekkinkreet*, illustrates his concern by reciting the names of several professional anime artists and directors in their 40s and older: his industry and craft may be finding audiences abroad just as they are dying in Japan.

"Making *Tekkinkreet*, I was fortunate to enough to work with some of the best talents in the field here in Japan," he says. "And I heard over and over from the veterans on my staff how depleted the ranks have become in the last ten years or so."

What to make of the apparent disparity between the image of a vibrant "cool Japan," and a much colder Japan – a domestic youth culture that is shrinking in

size, hope and ambition, and beginning to grow increasingly violent?

This June, when inveterate loner Tomohiro Kato plowed his truck into three people and stabbed 14 more, killing seven, in Akihabara, Tokyo's mecca of pop culture, the world outside Japan began to see the chill enveloping the nation's younger generations.

The nation was already dealing with a 2008 spike in hydrogen sulphide suicides, in which the young have found a new way to kill themselves with a chemical mixture involving over-the-counter detergents, whose airborne residue can also contaminate and potentially kill other innocents in the vicinity. A government report issued less than a week before Kato's killing spree noted that the birthrate continued to decline even as the suicide rate continued to rise.

A few weeks before Kato committed *kireru*, or a sudden, violent 'snapping' of lost control, Asuka Sawamoto, a 30-something former J-Pop idol, began showing off her thong underwear to legions in the Japanese media. The police swarmed in, Sawamoto was arrested, and street performances were severely curtailed.

This has been a bad year for Japanese pop culture, even as profits and interest abroad rises. Akihabara, the formerly benign center of Japanese fantasy, is starting to become an ugly repository of Japan's real problems.

Social critic Mariko Fujiwara blames the breakdown on the collapse of the family system, among other factors. The baby-boomer parents achieved a level of middle-class comfort. They had fewer children so they could sustain that comfort – and they gave their children everything, except the strength and guidance to navigate the myriad choices and uncertainties of the twenty-first century.

"Japanese kids today feel that if anything goes wrong for them, it will be disastrous for the entire family," says Fujiwara. "So they don't even want to try. There is a mismatch between their aspirations and their willingness to work to achieve them 'no matter what.' They thought material and digital connections would be enough, but they're discovering that they and their parents were wrong. Today's Japanese kids are incredibly unhappy."

What if Japan, the face of the future, is showing us who we are becoming – as a kind of proverbial 'canary in a coal mine,' a Cassandra of our trans-cultural futures. Consumerist, protectionist Japan is now celebrated worldwide as the Asian arbiter of cool, even chic. But at home, endless consumer choice and cleverness is starting to look hollow.

Evangelion auteur Hideaki Anno, now 47, believes

that the problem may not lie exclusively with Japan's younger generation. Instead, he says, there is no adulthood for them to grow into. "We are a country of children," Anno recently told a reporter from *The Atlantic Monthly*. "We don't have any adult role models in Japan."

I predict that the dilemma facing Japan – how to create a sophisticated adult culture in a capitalist society that has less need or room for one will – become commonplace in the coming years.

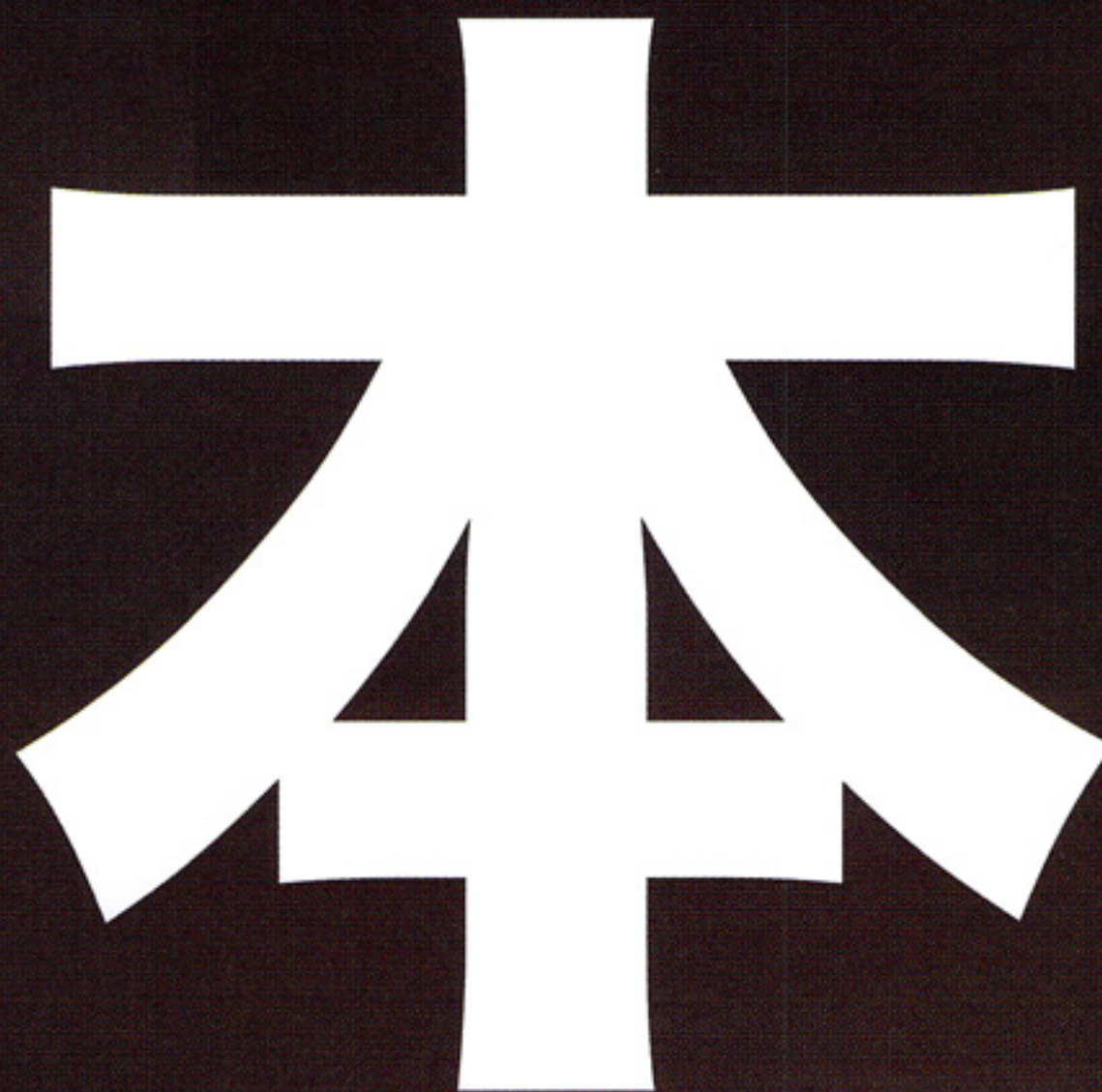
But Duke Professor Anne Allison is more buoyant about the freeter and hikikomori generations of slackers and shut-ins. After all, she says, "Where are all these fresh ideas coming from? They're not coming from kids who are going to college or becoming salarymen."

Allison points to the example of Satoshi Tajiri, once an isolated hikikomori boy taking solace in his addiction to Space Invaders, and now best-known for being the original creator of Pokemon.

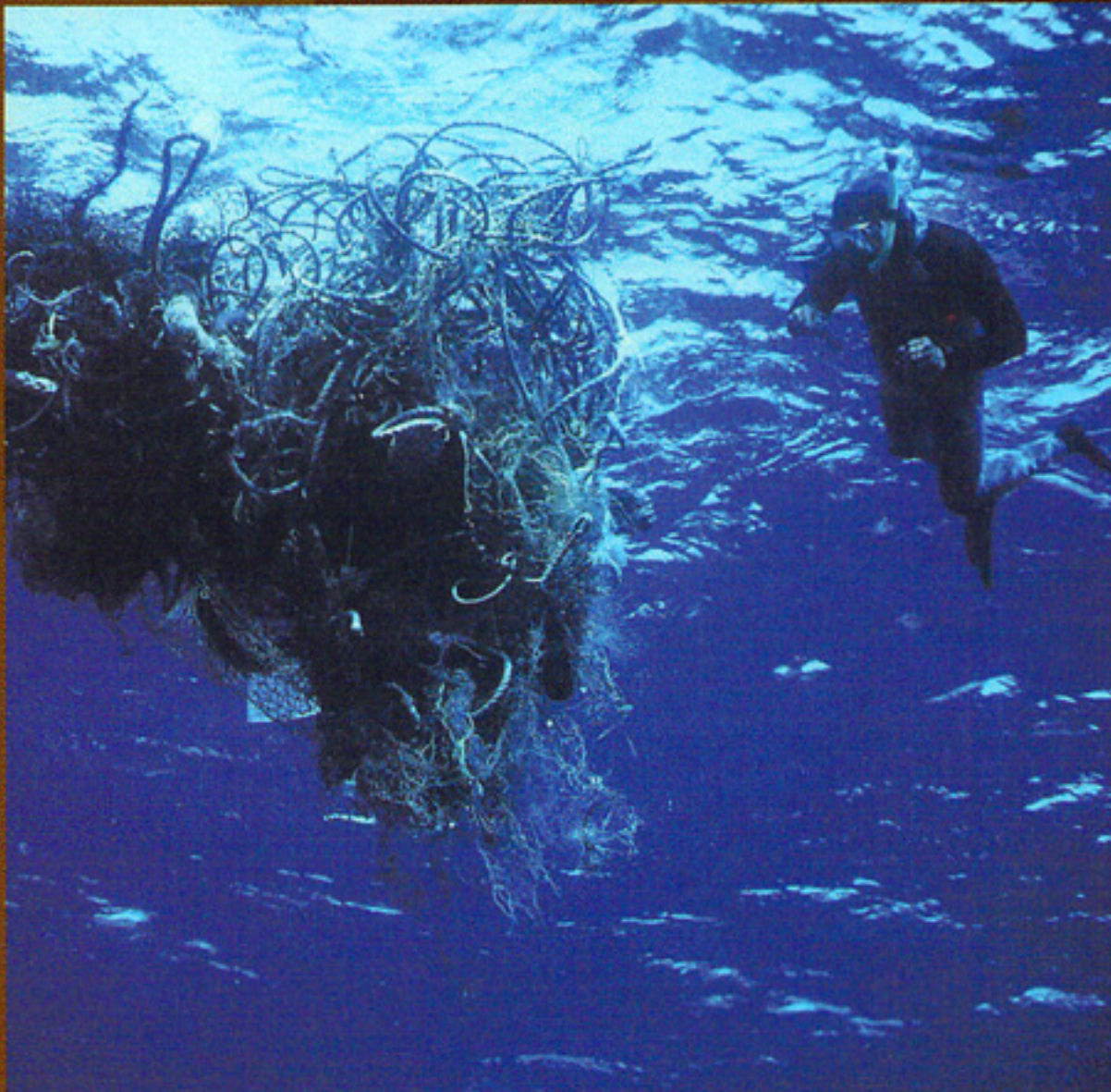
"We shouldn't blame the kids," she adds. "They're not at fault for neoliberalism or affective culture. They're just in it. Nobody believes in Japan Inc. anymore, because it doesn't exist."

She's right. The Japanese cult of the future is already dated. But if it – Japan Inc. – doesn't exist anymore, where do we go next?

Roland Kelts is a half-Japanese American writer who divides his time between New York and Tokyo and publishes in both English and Japanese. He is the author of Japanamerica: How Japanese Pop Culture has Invaded the U.S. (JapanAmericaBook.com), and the forthcoming novel, Access.



A GENERALIZED



Everlasting plastic churns in a saltwater abyss. The northern Pacific Ocean's swirling gyre of human waste is neither remote nor primeval, and it will long outlast the human experience.

The garbage gyre mocks our abject quest to accumulate, our blind appetite. We gradually ingest its Bisphenol-A backwash but don't seem to absorb the weight of our unflinching hunger for packaged convenience.

Premature puberty, ADHD, prostate collapse and hyper-aggression bubble to the cultural surface, buoyed by trashed bottles and cans, CDs and DVDs, sports gear and gadgetry. We just float on in search of more shiny objects.

Whether or not we begin to notice what our plastic diet might be doing to us, we'll keep feeding the gyre. Shopping is irrepressible; disposal is anonymous. But just as trends ebb and flow, so too does our shadow of waste.

How immense, irreparable and catastrophic the gyre is doesn't matter anymore. The real mental nuke is the massive chasm between this festering, apocalyptic Texas-sized mess we've made and the miniscule shit we give about it.

Eric Rumble



Pro eating disorder websites encourage anorexia and bulimia as a lifestyle choice.

The following conversation was found on one of the most popular pro ana sites – community.livejournal.com/proanorexi

Subject: Lonely.

SKINNYBITCH22: does anyone else feel like by having their [eating disorder] they isolate themselves from others? i never want to do anything with my friends in fear of having to eat in front of them. the friends that i do hang out with are all skinnier than me and it makes me feel self-conscious. i feel really lonely.

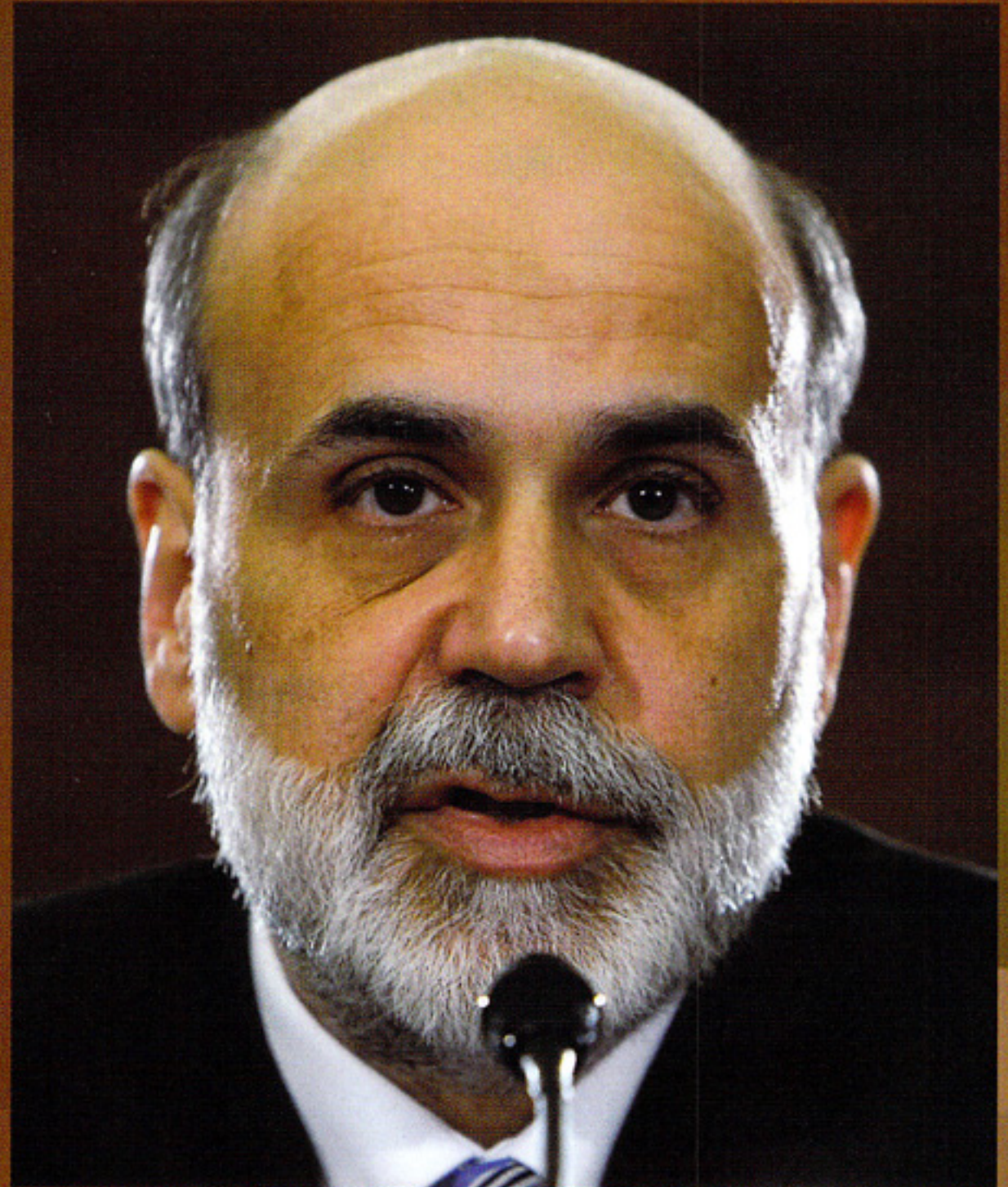
ULRICHEVELYN: I feel like that, especially in front of my family.

SHADEDINBLACK: you're not the only one. i refuse to hang out with anyone until i am skinny, i am too ashamed to go out looking like this. my skinnier friends make me feel self-conscious and my friends that are the same size or bigger confuse me on how they could be happy with themselves. then it just reminds me how screwed up i am for not accepting myself, that i should, and i wind up eating. i will go out when i feel more confident with my body and my control.

WITHTETH: I had the same problem with my friends – they were all skinnier than me and all they would do when we'd hang out is eat a TON of food & go swimming. my 2 biggest fears, so I just avoided them. My parents even tried to get me to leave hah, I missed out on a lot though i guess, so I try not to avoid too many social situations anymore, but I still do... I have to have everything planned like weeks in advance so I know how much I need to lose. ugh i hate when people 'drop by' too,

SATURARISING: I just avoided a phone call from a friend. I am trying to stay as reclusive as possible until I am at least in the mid nineties.

CRISIS OF MEANING



By our most conservative estimates, the Iraq War has cost an almost unimaginable \$3 trillion. A more realistic estimate, however, is closer to \$5 trillion – once you include all the downstream “off-budget costs” of long-term veteran benefits and treatment, the costs of restoring the now-depleted military to its pre-war strength, the considerable costs of actually withdrawing from Iraq and repositioning forces elsewhere in the region.

Then there are the micro costs. For example, if a soldier gets killed, his family gets a \$500,000 lifetime payment. That is not included in the public budget when the costs of the war are considered.

These costs are real and are not going away. You can’t continue to sweep them under the rug. Like your credit card bill, the costs only grow greater if you ignore them.

Finally, anybody who says we ought to stay in Iraq for even another four years, no less the next 100 years, as John McCain has suggested, has to honestly tell the American people how they are going to pay the \$12 billion-a-month bill. Where are we going to come up with another \$1.2 trillion? And is that going to make America more secure?

Let’s get out sooner rather than later. Above all, let’s stop fantasizing. It’s those fantasies that got us in trouble.

Excerpt from an interview with Joseph Stiglitz
NPQ Spring 2008

The current preoccupation with economic money games has diverted attention from the enfeeblement of the economy. Americans must come to their senses and return to an economic ideology based on dedication to enterprise and hard work.

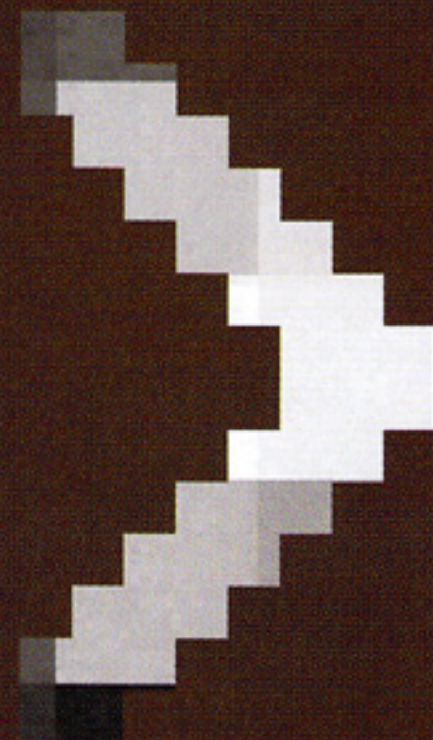
Once individuals have lost their self-discipline, it is very difficult for them to recover it. The American people must not be allowed to lose their vigor and decline into ineffectual weakness. The greatest priority now is to correct the unbridled bloating of the economy that has occurred over the past few years, and to return to the situation that existed before. This can only be achieved through massive tax increases and lower standards of living.

Unfortunately, no one in the United States is prepared to take such a course of action. Even if such people did exist, no doubt they would soon be silenced. There is no awareness of the need for this type of action – not in the government, not among economists and certainly not among the voters. With these attitudes, there is a danger that people will simply charge ahead unheeding, assuming that America’s economic problems will disappear, and clinging to the delusion that everything will be all right in the end since America is strong and “God is on our side.”

If this happens, conditions will not stabilize until there has been a sudden, catastrophic collapse.

Osamu Shimomura
Chairman, Japan Economic Institute
Adbusters #3, 1990





1995 — Ad campaign, Calvin Klein Jeans.

BIG

WE NOW HAVE WORD THAT TONY BLAIR, envoy of the Middle East Quartet (the UN, the EU, Russia and the United States), and German Chancellor Angela Merkel intend to organize yet another peace conference. It is hard to believe that after the long string of failed peace initiatives, stretching back at least to the Madrid conference of 1991, diplomats are recycling these failures without seemingly having a clue as to why the Israeli-Palestinian conflicts is even more hopeless today than before these peace exercises first got under way.

The scandal of the international community's impotence in resolving one of history's longest bloodlettings is that it knows what the problem is, but does not have the courage to speak the truth, much less deal with it. The peace conference will suffer from the same gutlessness that has marked all previous efforts. It will deal with everything except the problem primarily responsible for the impasse. That problem is that for all the sins attributable to Palestinians – and they are legion, including inept and corrupt leadership, failed institutions-building and the murderous violence of rejectionist groups – there is no prospect for a viable, sovereign Palestinian state, primarily because Israel's various governments, from 1967 until today, have never had the intention of allowing such a state to come into being.

It would be one thing if Israeli governments had insisted on delaying a Palestinian state until certain security concerns had been dealt with. But no government serious about a two-state solution to the conflict would have pursued, without letup, the theft and fragmentation of Palestinian lands, which even a child understands makes Palestinian statehood impossible.

Given the overwhelming disproportion of power between the occupier and the occupied, it is hardly surprising that Israeli governments and their military and security establishments found it difficult to resist the acquisition of Palestinian land. What is astounding is that the international community, pretending to believe Israel's claim that it is the victim and its occupied subjects the



Situated in the desert south of the Israeli city of Dimona, the distinctive Negev Nuclear Research Center has long stood as a symbol of the country's policy of deliberate ambiguity regarding its nuclear arsenal.

DICK



aggressors, has allowed this devastating dispossession to continue and the law of the jungle to prevail.

As long as Israel knows that by delaying the peace process it buys time to create facts on the ground, and that the international community will continue to indulge Israel's pretense that its desire for a two-state solution is being frustrated by the Palestinians, no new peace initiative can succeed, and the dispossession of the Palestinian people will indeed become irreversible.

There can be no great delusion on the part of Western countries weighed down by guilt about the Holocaust than the belief that accommodating such an outcome would be an act of friendship to the Jewish people. The abandonment of the Palestinians now is surely not an atonement for the abandonment of European Jews seventy years ago, nor will it serve the security of the State of Israel and its people.

John Vinocur of the *New York Times* recently suggested that the virtually unqualified declarations of support for Israel by Merkel and French President Nicolas Sarkozy are "at a minimum an attempt to seek Israeli moderation by means of public assurances with this tacit subtext: these days, the European Union is not, or is no longer, its reflexive antagonist." But the expectation that uncritical Western support of Israel would lead to greater Israeli moderation and greater willingness to take risks for peace is blatantly contradicted by the conflict's history.

Time and again, this history has shown that the less opposition Israel encounters from its friends in the West for its dispossession of the Palestinians, the more uncompromising its behavior. Indeed, soon after Sarkozy's and Merkel's expressions of eternal solidarity, Israel's Ehud Olmert approved massive new construction in East Jerusalem – authorizing housing projects that had been frozen for years by previous governments because of their destructive impact on the possibility of a peace agreement – as well as continued expansion of Israel's settlements. And Olmert's defense minister, Ehud Barak, declared shortly after Merkel's departure that he will remove only a token number of the more

than 500 checkpoints and roadblocks that Israel has repeatedly promised, and just as repeatedly failed, to dismantle. That announcement shattered whatever hope Palestinians may have had for recovery of their economy, as a consequence of \$7 billion in new aid promised by international donors in December. In these circumstances, the international donor community will not pour good money after bad, as they so often have in the past.

What is required of statesmen is not more peace conferences or clever adjustments to previous peace formulations, but the moral and political courage to end their collaboration with the massive hoax the peace process has been turned into. Of course, Palestinian violence must be condemned and stopped, particularly when it targets civilians. But is it not utterly disingenuous to pretend that Israel's occupation – maintained by IDF-manned checkpoints and barricades, helicopter gunships, jet fighters, targeted assassinations and military incursions, not to speak of the massive theft of Palestinian lands – is not an exercise in continuous and unrelenting violence against more than 3 million Palestinian civilians? If Israel were to renounce violence, could the occupation last even one day?

Israel's designs on the West Bank are not much different from the designs of the Arab forces that attacked the Jewish state in 1948 – the nullification of the international community's partition resolution of 1947. Short of addressing the problem by its right name – something that is of an entirely different order than hollow statements that "settlements do not advance peace" – and taking effective collective action to end a colonial enterprise that disgraces what began as a noble Jewish national liberation struggle, further peace conferences, no matter how well intentioned, make their participants accessories to one of the longest and cruelest deceptions in the annals of international diplomacy.

Henry Siegman

Editorial originally appeared in the
May 05, 2008 issue of *The Nation*

BIGGER

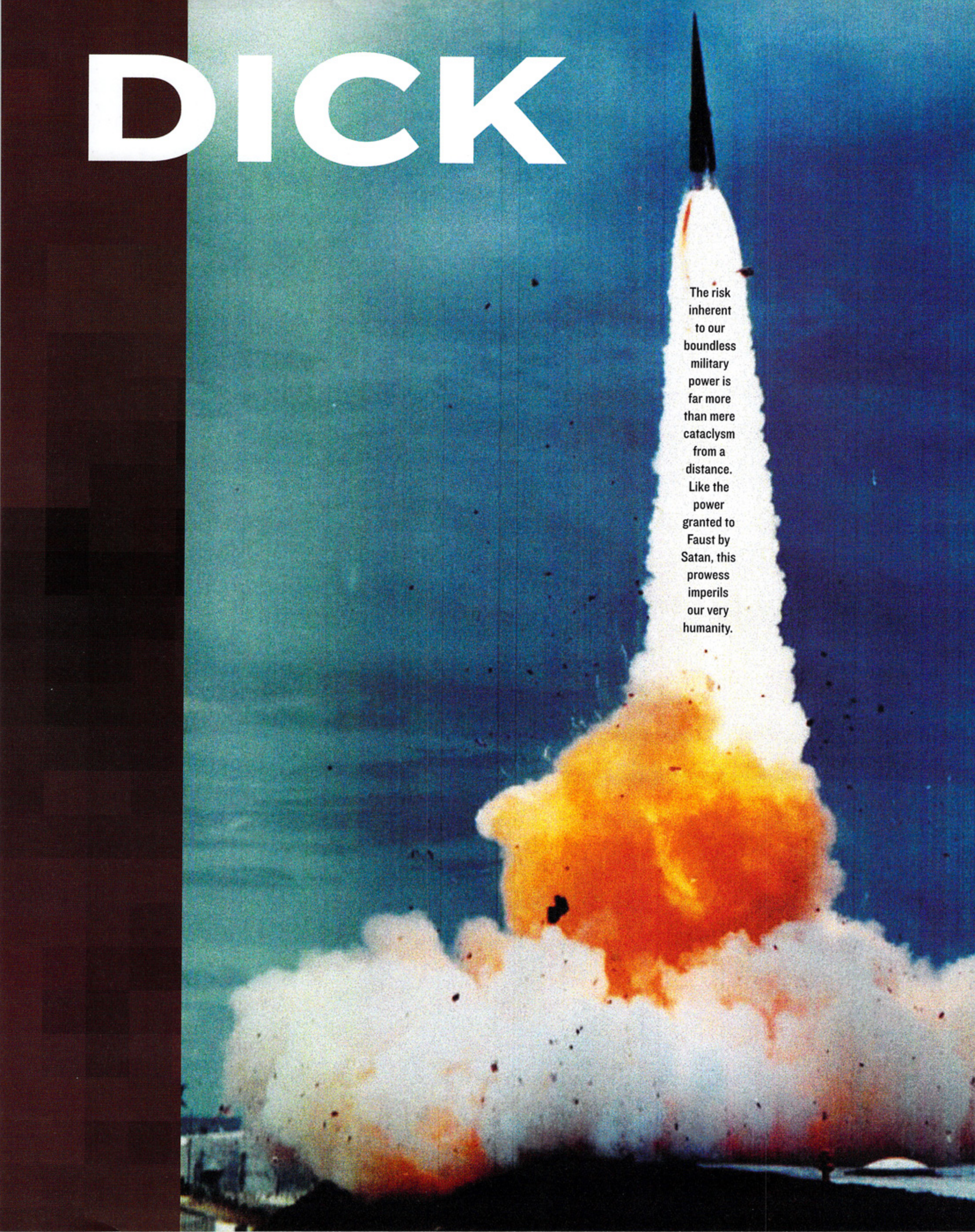
AMERICA IS NO STRANGER TO DOUBLESPEAK. AND WHEN IT COMES to nuclear proliferation, the US has a less than charming way of setting double standards for itself and its allies, while it threatens countries like Iran and North Korea with annihilation for following suit.

Put yourself in the shoes of Iran, North Korea, China or even Russia. How would you respond to a country that pledges allegiance to the concept of nuclear non-proliferation but which:

Shows no interest in verifiably dismantling its stockpile of 10,000 warheads and bombs, 5,300 of which remain operational; continues to maintain some 2,500 warheads on quick launch alert, ready for firing within minutes of receiving a launch order; publicly promulgates a strategy for preemptive nuclear attack and even identifies possible target countries; initiates plans to rebuild its nuclear weapons factories for the express purpose of churning out new warheads well into the 21st century; modernizes its warheads and delivery systems to increase their accuracy and effectiveness against hardened targets, something that only makes sense if the weapons are launched first; Is building a missile defense system which clearly has no current or even prospective capability to defeat an attack of anything more than a handful of ballistic missiles – if that – but which could prove quite useful in “mopping up” an adversary’s ragtag response to a United States first strike?

Adapted from an interview with Hans Blix in NPQ, Spring 2008

DICK

A photograph of a rocket launch. The rocket is a slender, white, conical object pointing upwards. It is surrounded by a large, billowing plume of white smoke and a bright orange and yellow fire at its base. The background is a clear blue sky. The overall image has a grainy, high-contrast quality.

The risk
inherent
to our
boundless
military
power is
far more
than mere
cataclysm
from a
distance.
Like the
power
granted to
Faust by
Satan, this
prowess
imperils
our very
humanity.

BOLTON DODGES WAR CRIMES

They started a war with doctored evidence and without United Nations consent. They tortured prisoners, paraded them around naked and subjected them to waterboarding. They held suspects in prisons for years without ever charging them.

Although key figures in the Bush administration have committed numerous war crimes during their 'War on Terror,' they have never been charged. Yet, the evidence against the Bush administration continues to mount – even General Antonio Taguba, who led the US army's investigation into the Abu Ghraib abuse, recently declared "the current administration has committed war crimes."

But as the Bush administration enters its twilight, a growing number of politicians, lawyers and activists want to bring them to justice. Last May, British environmental journalist George Monbiot attempted to make a citizen's arrest on John Bolton, Bush's former Under-Secretary of State. While the arrest wasn't successful, it put the spotlight back on the Bush administration's crimes. *Adbusters* editor Sean Condon talked with Monbiot about why he decided to take matters into his own hands.

Adbusters: Why did you try to arrest John Bolton?

George Monbiot: The Iraq War is slipping from the public's consciousness and I wanted to remind people that it is a supreme international crime. The perpetrators of this crime are living among us and they are responsible for the murder of some hundreds of thousands of people. They must be brought to justice. Obviously I can't bring them to justice by myself, but by reminding people of the crimes, I hope to create an atmosphere which makes it more likely that one day they might be investigated and prosecuted.

AB: Do you think it will have to be citizens who make the arrests?

GM: The process to arrest war criminals within the Bush administration exists, but the willingness does not. So in the absence of that official response, the only people who are going to try to advance this process are independent citizens, and it's a shame that it has to be like that. If there was an official process and if the courts were pursuing these

people then I wouldn't have to bother to expose myself to that risk.

AB: What is the specific charge for Bolton?

GM: The charge is most clearly formulated by the Nuremberg principles, which are broadly accepted as the mainstay of customary international law and assimilated into the nation laws of countries around the world. They define it as a crime of aggression, a war that is waged in violation of international treaties or a war that is preemptive rather than immediately defensive. On both counts the Iraq War clearly qualifies as a crime of aggression.

It's very clear that Bolton was involved in the planning of the Iraq war. One line of evidence is that he inserted the false claims about Iraq's attempt to obtain uranium from Niger into a state department fact sheet.

AB: Bolton's defense is that Iraq broke international law, thus allowing American to invade.

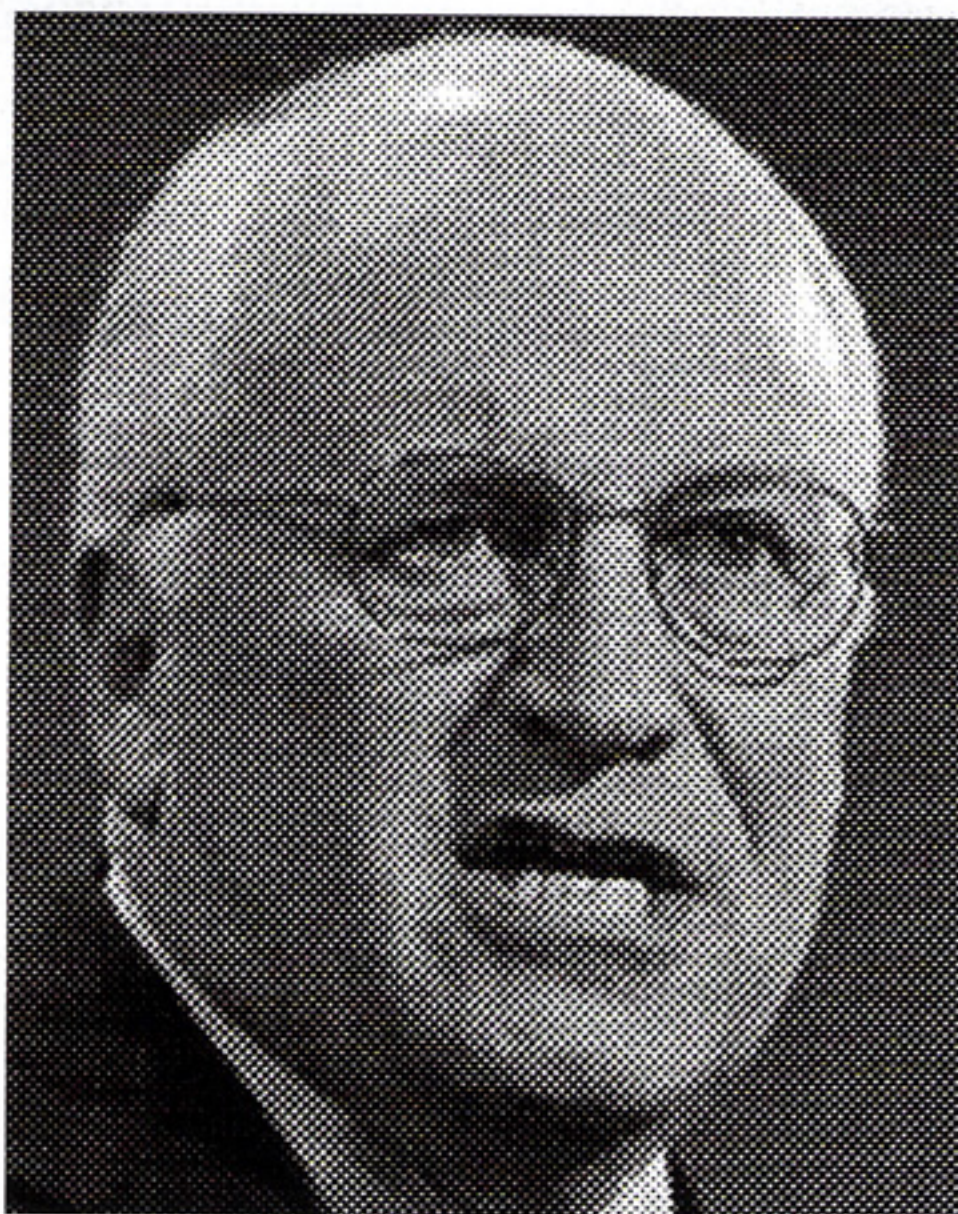
GM: Well, the only circumstance that

the United Nations allows a country to engage in war without its expressed prior approval is in an extreme situation of self-defense as defined by Article 51 of the UN Charter. That was not the case with the Iraq War. Self-defense is defined as responding to an attack. Iraq did not attack the United States and indeed wasn't even threatening to attack the United States.

AB: Are you trying to make it as uncomfortable as possible for members of the Bush administration to travel abroad?

GM: I hope they feel confident about traveling abroad. We don't want to scare them away. In fact, perhaps we should encourage them to feel as comfortable as possible while traveling abroad so that they can then walk into the trap, given that it is highly unlikely that they would ever be prosecuted on American soil. But the process has to begin. This great crime cannot be allowed to stand uncharged, and we cannot allow a situation to persist which says that those who commit such a crime can expect to get away with it, because that encourages other people to commit the same crime.

Most Wanted War Criminals



Dick Cheney

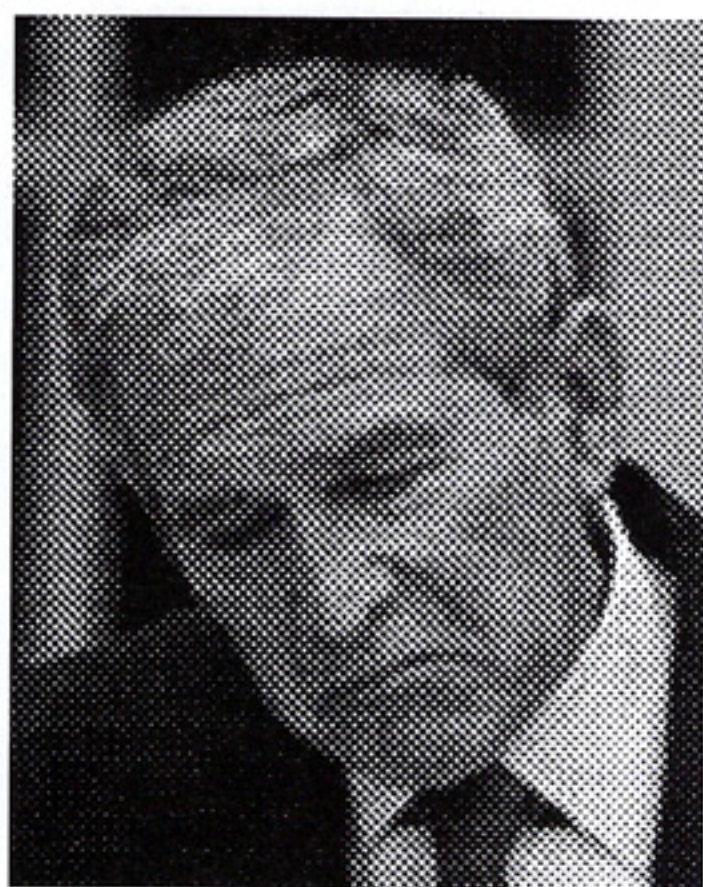
Age: 67

Occupation: Vice President of the United States

Aliases: Big Time, Satan, the President

Remarks: Goes hiding in "undisclosed locations" during times of crises. Shot friend in the face with a shotgun.

Caution: Wanted for being the key architect of the Iraq War, which runs counter to the United Nations Charter's prohibition on the use of armed force except in self-defense. Responsible for approving torture techniques and the illegal detention of prisoners in violation of international humanitarian and human rights law. Subverted democracy, ignored the Geneva Conventions and unleashed crimes against humanity in Iraq and Afghanistan. Should be considered armed and dangerous.



George W. Bush

Age: 62

Occupation: President of the United States

Aliases: Dubya, the Vice President

Remarks: Used family prestige to avoid combat in Vietnam. Won the 2000 presidential election even though he lost the popular vote. Considered a puppet of neoconservative strategists.

Caution: Responsible for approving torture techniques against prisoners of war. Authorized the violations of rights of individuals under the American Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Should be considered armed but not dangerous.



Donald Rumsfeld

Age: 76

Occupation: Former Secretary of Defense

Aliases: Rummy, the Procrastinator

Remarks: Forged a close relationship with Saddam Hussein during the Iran-Iraq War (provided him with intelligence, hardware and strategic advice). Had Hussein killed two decades later for crimes committed during Iran-Iraq War.

Caution: Key architect of Iraq War. Authorized torture techniques at Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison. Breached Geneva Conventions by approving the extrajudicial execution of suspected Al-Qaeda operatives anywhere in the world.



John Ashcroft

Age: 66

Occupation: Former Attorney General of the United States

Aliases: Chicken Legs, the Surfer

Remarks: Lost the 2000 Missouri Senate election to a dead man. Key supporter of the USA Patriot Act, which drastically curtailed the rights and freedoms of Americans.

Caution: Authorized the use of abuse against prisoners of war in violation of international humanitarian and human rights law. Approved the use of waterboarding against terrorism suspects.

Where are you America?

America, was the grass greener in Colombia?
Or did you like the smell
of sand and oil in Iran?
Maybe Lebanon had better skies
or Haiti better coasts.
Cuba had better fields
and Laos had a better moon.
Where are you America?
Did Thailand cast the first stone?
Did Vietnam pay for the human cost?
Was the Congo worth your time?
Or was the Dominican Republic a better prospect?
Was Indonesia a vacation?
Cambodia was harboring ideas,
Chile was harboring civilians,
and Angola was harboring democracy.
Where are you America?
Did you train your enemies in Afghanistan?
Did Libya dare look you in the eye?
Were you trying to leech a living in Nicaragua?
Did El Salvador gun down allies?
The sky in Lebanon was better the second tour.
Grenada was a side project.
Chad was in the way.
Bolivia's produce tastes better stolen,
and Panama made a good port.
Where are you America?
Are you in the oil fields of Iraq?
Did you spin the globe and end up in Somalia?
Did Yugoslavia send out a war call?

Or was it Macedonia?

Iraq has a tendency of wanting freedom
while Bosnia stirs up trouble.

Iraq has a tendency of losing freedoms
while Sudan keeps us troubled.

Yugoslavia and Afghanistan
must have something you want.

Who knows why you're in Yemen,
and the Philippines must have been another vacation.

Where are you America?

Colombia wants to breathe
but you asphyxiate her.

Iraq wants to live
but you wound her.

Liberia has a voice too
but you silence her.

Haiti had faith in democracy
but you crushed her.

America where are you?

Are you amongst the coal and oil?

Was the war machine unleashed
to roam free?

Are you that empire we all feared?

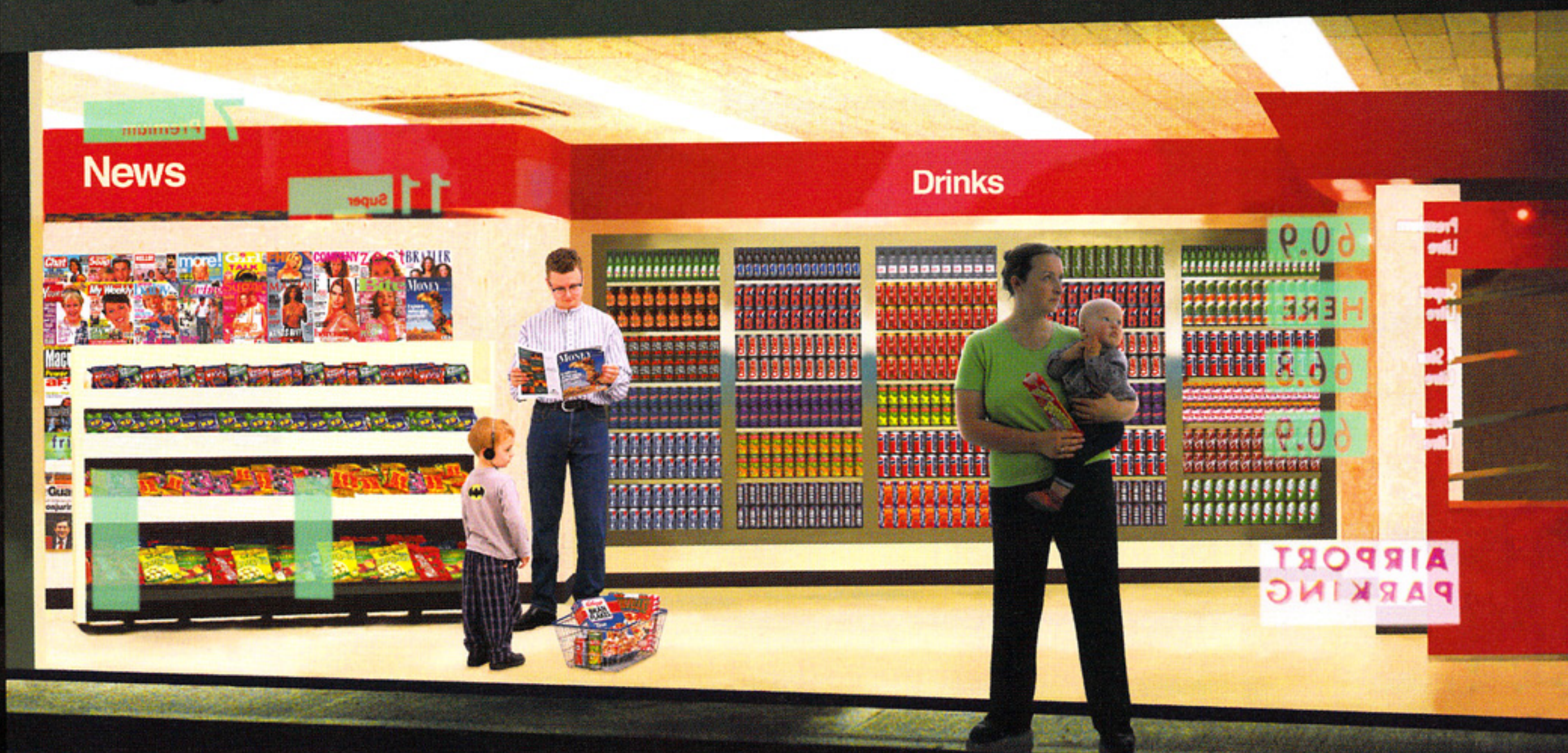
America,
you're everywhere but here.

You can try
but you won't silence me.

You can try
but you won't conquer me.

— Sergio Jimenez

Mobil Mart



JOHN GOTO
MOBIL MART

Life at the end of empire

AS ANY THERAPIST CAN TELL YOU, DENIAL IS THE hallmark of addiction. Overcome with insatiable, indomitable need, addicts retreat to a place deep within themselves – a dark enclave of insulated existence where they are shielded from the blinding glare of objective truth. “I don’t have a problem,” they will say. “I can stop anytime.” Eyes unblinking and voice steady, an addict will look you straight in the face and perpetuate one of the most grievous lies we can tell ourselves as human beings.

“I’m in control.”

The delusion of power in the face of addiction has proven to be the fatal flaw in an untold number of human tragedies. It is the lie that allows us to persist in destructive patterns of behavior while telling ourselves that we can stop, we will stop – just not today.

Western culture, argues TS Bennett in his recent documentary, *What a Way to Go: Life at the End of Empire*, is an addict in denial. Heavily hooked on oil, consumption and unchecked economic growth, our bloated culture of empire trolls the shadowy back-alleys of the global marketplace desperately searching for its next hit. And with every score, the gaping hole of need becomes wider.

Intrinsically, our needs are relatively slight – a point Bennett demonstrates with a poignant montage of his idyllic midwestern upbringing. Grainy home movie footage reveals the vast whiteness of winter marked by rosy-cheeked children sliding head-first down snow banks. Summers are spent swimming in sparkling blue ponds. Food is grown in sweeping fields that extend beyond the horizon. Bennett is the offspring of an increasingly threatened American breed – the kind of people who live a relatively independent rural existence, free from

the cycle of consumption that plagues larger metropolitan populations. But as cities grow and those metropolitan populations spread, fewer and fewer Americans are growing up in environments like that of Bennett’s childhood. An increasingly urban existence severs our connection to the earth, the process of living and, ultimately, ourselves. It is from this ever-widening disconnect that our sense of false need is born.

“What most of us experience when it comes to addiction is a pattern of continually seeking more of what it is we don’t really want and, therefore, never being fully satisfied,” Sally Erickson, the film’s producer, told *AlterNet*. “And as long as we are never satisfied, we continue to seek more, while our real needs are never being met.”

It is this definition of addiction that encompasses the Western human experience. Our insatiable modern appetites have created a civilization based entirely on consumption – of products, of resources, of space. But no matter how much we buy or how large we grow, we can never seem to fill the yawning expanse of collective need. And, like the addicts that we are, we live with the hope that satisfaction is just one more hit away – one more car, one more handbag, one more war to secure the resources vital to our diseased way of life.

The planet is giving us every indication that it can no longer support our habits. Peak oil, mass extinction, catastrophic climate change. With every passing day, the signs are becoming more and more difficult to deny. But we deny them anyway. We swear we’ll curb emissions, we promise to halt growth. We pledge to actively pursue an alternative energy policy. We don’t have a problem. We can stop anytime we want. Just not today.

Sarah Nardi

~~Marxism~~

~~Modernism~~

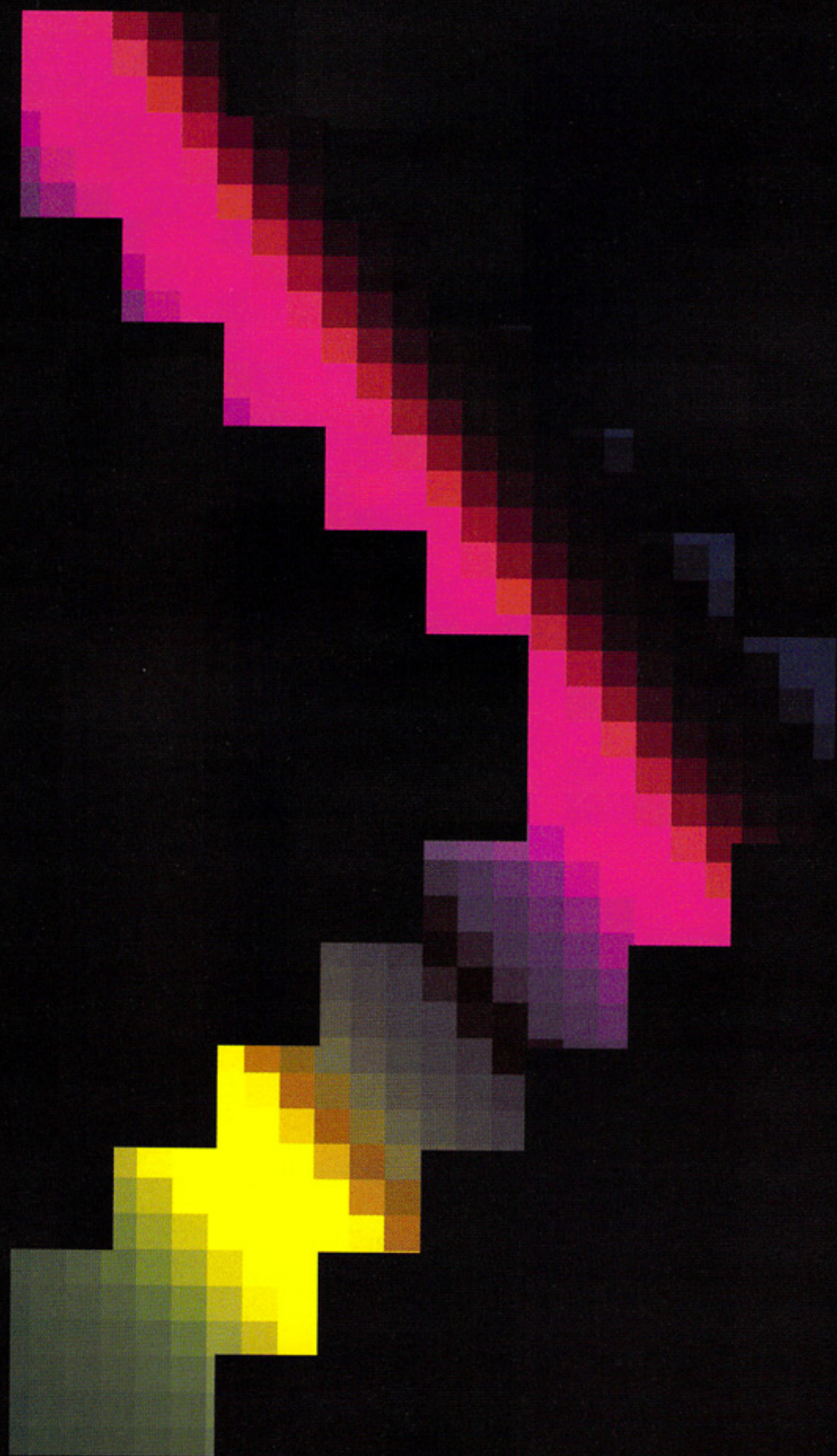
~~Feminism~~



~~Postmodernism~~

~~Consumerism~~

~~Terrorism~~



Be present. I would encourage you with all my heart – just to be present. Be present and open to the moment that is unfolding before you. Because, ultimately, your life is made up of moments. So don't miss them by being lost in the past or anticipating the future.

Don't be absent from your own life. You will find that life is not governed by will or intention. It is ultimately the collection of these sense memories stored in our nerves, built up in our cells. Simple things: A certain slant of light coming through a window on a winter's afternoon. The sound of spring peepers at twilight. The taste of a strawberry still warm from the sun. Your child's laughter. Your mother's voice.

Jessica Lange's 2008 commencement address to the graduates of Sarah Lawrence College



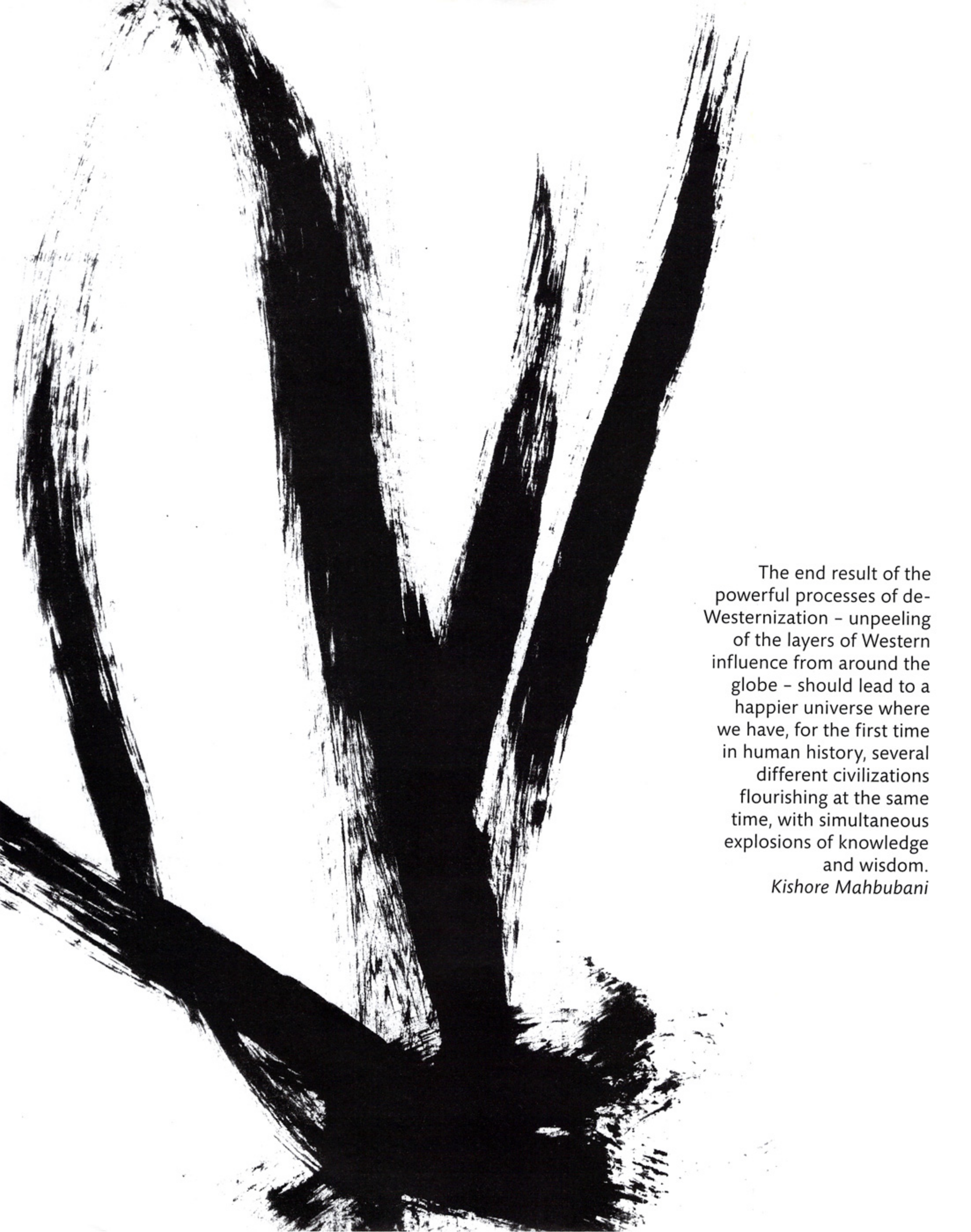
DEAR?

**You've reached the logical conclusion.
Start again in a different frame of mind.**



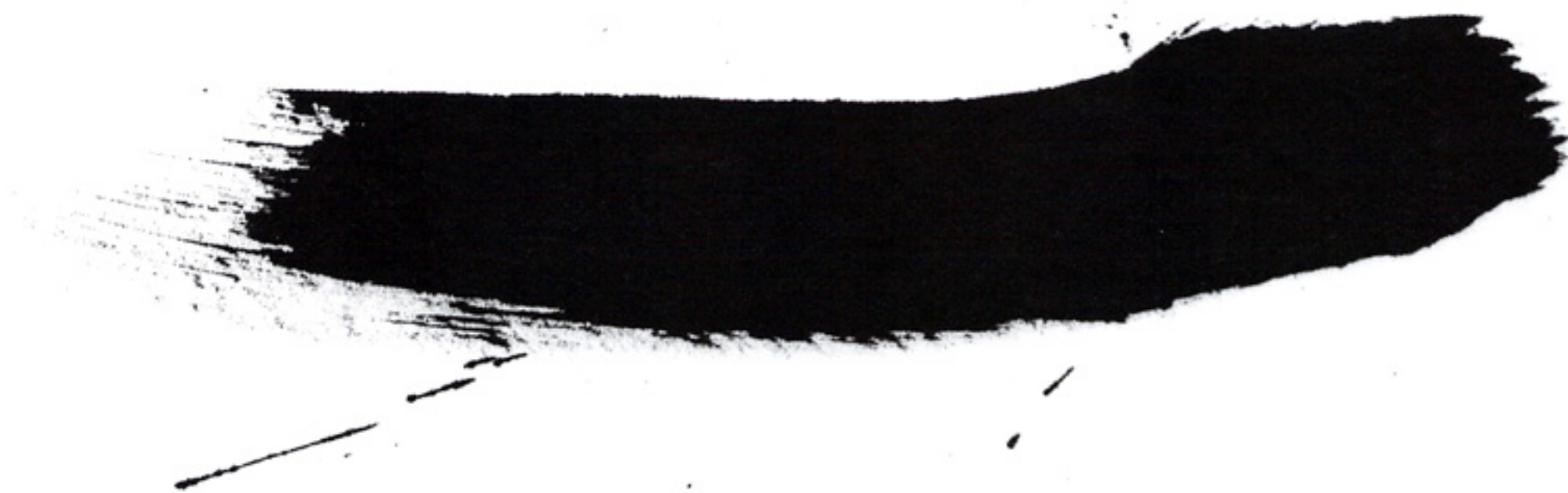
new beginning

Time for a fresh start.
See if the grass is greener
on the other side.



The end result of the powerful processes of de-Westernization – unpeeling of the layers of Western influence from around the globe – should lead to a happier universe where we have, for the first time in human history, several different civilizations flourishing at the same time, with simultaneous explosions of knowledge and wisdom.

Kishore Mahbubani



I've always been obsessed with ambiances

and aesthetics as well as *dérive*, *détournement* and other ways of changing the tone of my everyday life. Guy Debord and the Situationists are my heroes. They were the first to sense that something had gone terribly wrong at the heart of our culture – that a stultifying boredom and sameness was creeping into our lives. They plotted a revolution to overthrow “the society of the spectacle.” Their approach was very effective: don't argue with people, make them live!

And in 1968, people suddenly did. In Paris, they took to the streets, erected barricades, fought with police, occupied offices, factories, hospitals, railway depots and universities. They sang songs, issued manifestos, and sprayed slogans like ‘Live Without Dead Time’ and ‘Down With The Spectacular-Commodity Culture,’ all over their city.

“Art students demanded the realization of art; music students called for ‘wild and ephemeral music;’ footballers kicked out managers with the slogan ‘football to the football players;’ gravediggers occupied cemeteries; doctors, nurses and the interns at a psychiatric hospital organized in solidarity with the inmates,” wrote Sadie Plant in *The Most Radical Gesture*. “People who had worked in offices and factories all their lives suddenly broke from their daily routines and... *lived*.”

At the height of the uprising, people marched in Bonn, Rome, London, Tokyo, New York and dozens of other cities around the world; students in universities revolted. For a few heady weeks, a tantalizing question hung in the air: Could this be the beginning of the first global revolution?

But the spell broke. The moment passed. This revolt against consumer capitalism was not to be. And since then, for the past 40 years, we've descended deeper and deeper into the spectacle. It's omnipresent now. We're in it and it's in us. We're living in what Debord, in the last years of his life, described as the “integrated spectacle,” characterized by “incessant technological renewal; integration of state and economy; generalized secrecy; unanswerable lies; an eternal present.”

If we could see beyond the incessant commercial chatter of our everyday lives, we would realize that our Western way of life has reached a dead end... that the twin towers of our civilization – scientific rationality and individual freedom – crashed to the ground a long time ago.

And we would realize that the only thing that can save us now are infusions of new blood from other civilizations: heavy hits of spontaneity from Brazil, inspirational flows of group consciousness from Japan, fusions of filial piety from China and India and constant whiffs of religious devotion from the Islamic world.

In this issue of *Adbusters*, we sift through the detritus of Western civilization to see what we can salvage. If you find something, let me know.

for the wild, Kalle

ME,
MYSELF
AND I





A Bill of Rights for Future Generations

We, the people of the future,

like the multitudes who came before us, have the right to air that smells sweet, to water that tastes pure, and to land that is fertile, unsoiled and green.

We have the right to inherit a world free of chemicals, of nuclear waste and of genetic pollution. We have the right to live alongside nature, some of which is still untamed.

We ask you, the people of the present, not to bequeath us a toxic legacy. We ask that you not gamble with technology that may backfire in the future, and request that you not burden us with the weight of ever-deferred debt. We would like to claim our share of the planet's wealth. Please, do not use it all up.

In turn, we promise to grant these same rights and privileges to the generations who follow us, in the sacred hope that the human spirit will live forever.

A curse on any generation who ignores this desperate plea.

A
FIRST
THINGS
FIRST
PROJECT

THE ONE FLAG

DESIGN COMPETITION

Challenges

dream

WORDS

ACTION

LOVE

Design is at war with itself. We are taught that design is about finding solutions. But the success of these solutions is judged so narrowly – Did it ooze desire? Did it shift units? – that we find ourselves implicated in problems far greater than the ones we solve.

The time has come for a radical shift in priorities. We are now faced with some of the most daunting global challenges in human history. These are real targets, worthy of our problem-solving skills, ripe for our intervention. Yet those who have the vision to rise above national and political boundaries still have no symbol to rally under.

We invite you to create a flag – free from language and well-worn clichés – that embodies the idea of global citizenship. A symbol that triggers pride and cohesion, whether worn on a backpack, displayed on a door, or flown on a flagpole. A symbol for anyone to declare membership in a growing and vital human cooperative. We invite you to prove that design has a real role to play in the fate of our world.

Submissions will be critiqued by a panel of prominent design professionals, then featured in Adbusters and supporting design publications. The winning flag will go into production, ready for flying by the patriotic citizens of Earth. Deadline for entries is **December 1, 2008**.

Judges include: Jonathan Barnbrook / Michael Bierut / Vince Frost / Steven Heller / Kalle Lasn / Rick Poyner / Dmitri Siegel. More to be announced.

adbusters.org/oneflag



ONE FLAG COMPETITION DESIGN
PEDRO INOUE

WHERE WILL CAP

2008

Blackspot is about fostering a new kind of bottoms-up, indy business and getting rid of mega corporations.

'90s

The popularization of organic movement. Fair trade enters the picture. The consumer electric car. Sweatshops, oil spills and labor issues give consumers a glimpse of the seedy underbelly of business. People start to develop appreciation for eco-friendly business.

1994
Fair Trade

2003

Birth of Rethink Capitalism Movement

2002

Buy Local

'00s

Efforts to buy local, 100-mile diet, farmers' markets, green marketing. Focus on sustainability. The marketplace starts to reflect a preference for ethical consumption. Green campaigns are still overwhelmingly hot air.

A
NEW
FUTURE

BUSINESS
AS
USUAL

ITALISM GO NEXT?

We are at a tipping point. The movement has been building over time, and we can see the pace quickening. Responsibility and accountability are creeping in, but where will it all go? Ethical businesses now exist, but they are the exceptions, not the rule. Are we going to sit back and do nothing, or are we going to take action and create a sustainable society for the future?

'80s

Often remembered as a decade of self-indulgence, the '80s also produced the first ever corporate responsibility report.

1992
Organic

1988

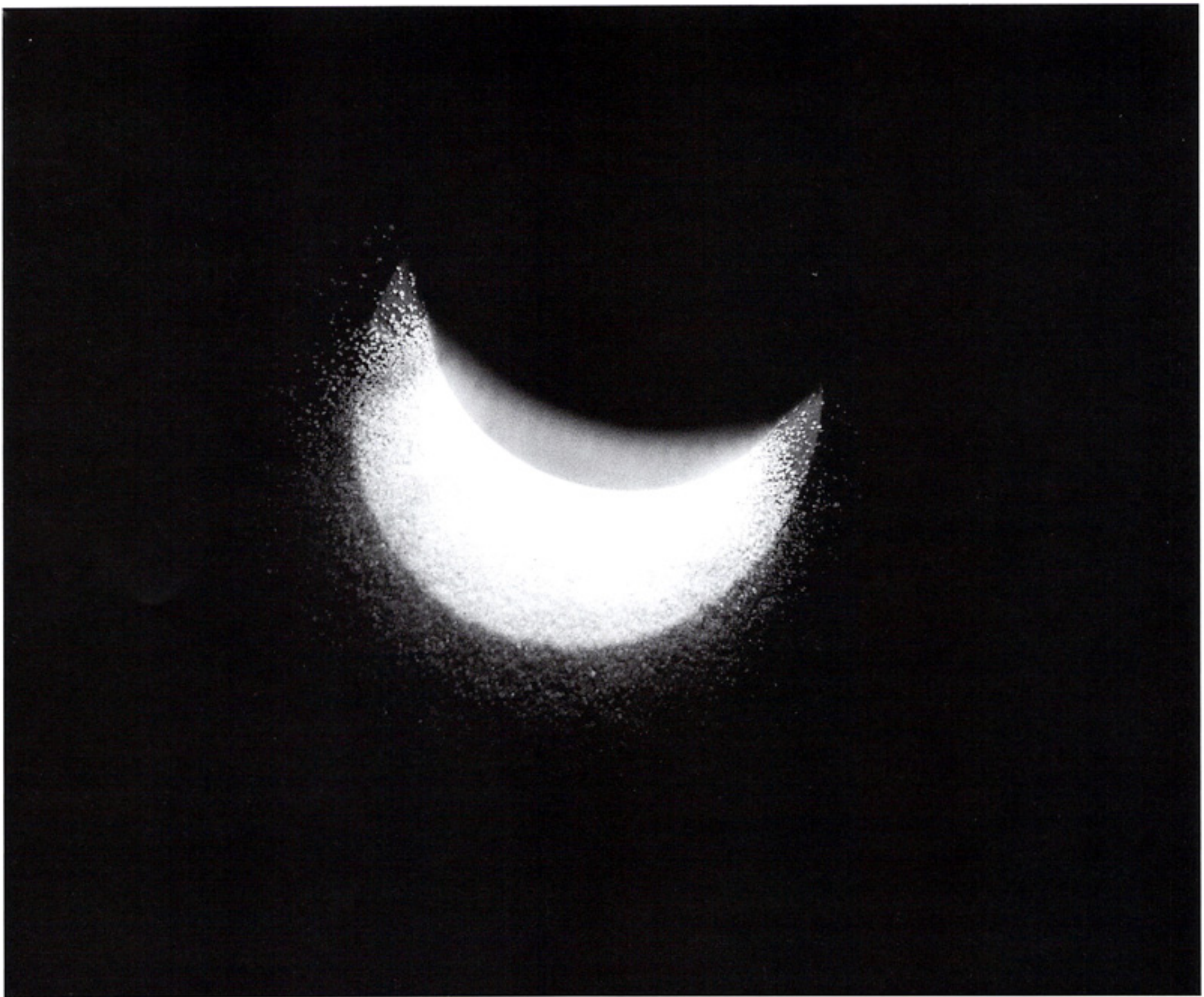
Corporate Social Responsibility Report

1972

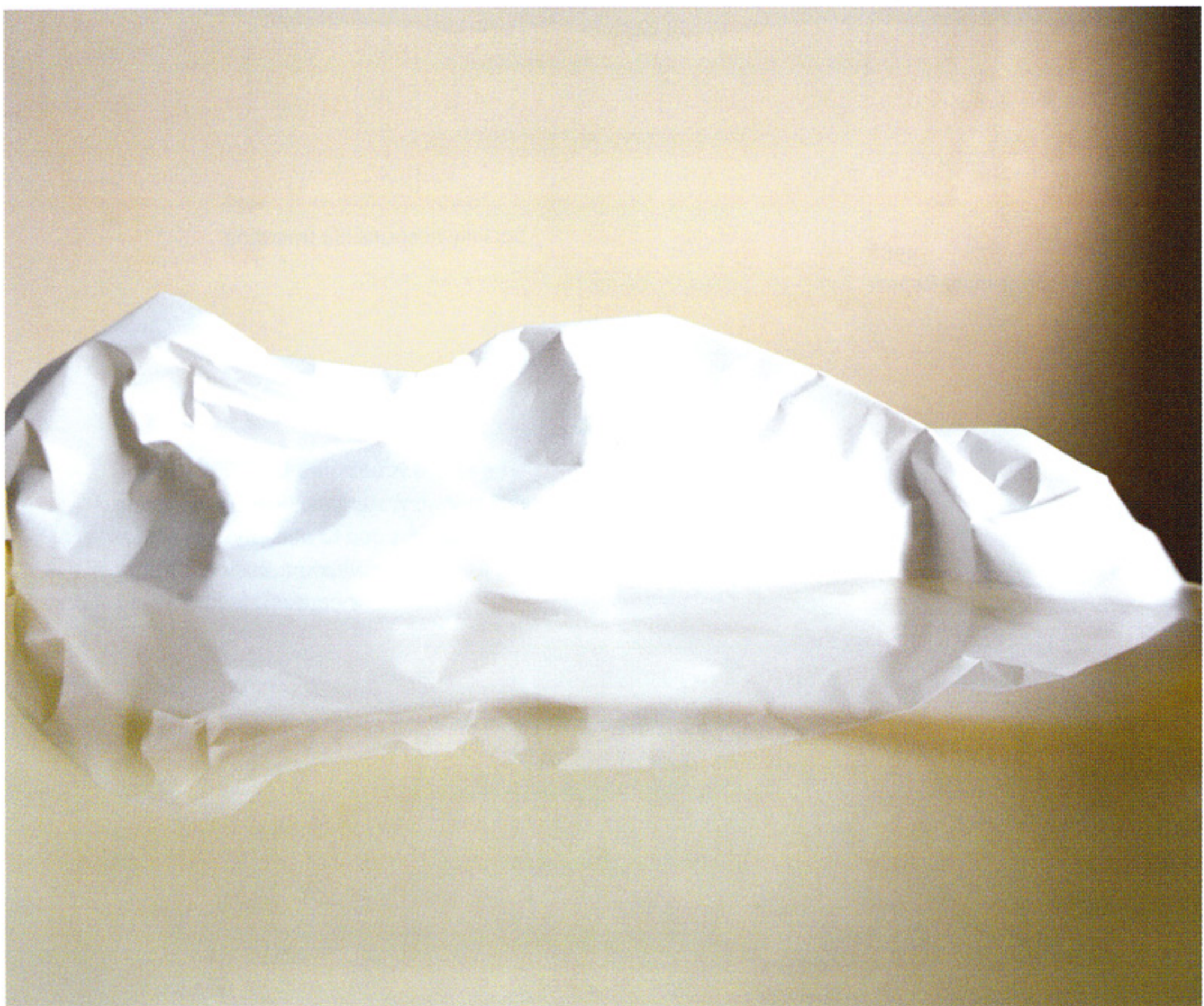
Socially Responsible Investing

'70s

The world is haunted by images of the Vietnam War. Watergate. Consumers losing faith in business due to deception in advertising and price collusion. Business ethics emerge as a field of study.



REBECCA HORNE
UNTITLED—SALT MOON
2006
UNTITLED—PAPER,
MOUNTAINS, WATER
2002





RESILIENCE OR SURVIVAL —

Perhaps this is because we are finally realizing that the imminent threats of global warming, climate change, overpopulation, poverty, religious wars, peak oil, food scarcity, etc. are real. So we are now talking about the need to become resilient, to be ready to cope with all the social, economic and environmental changes and challenges that are coming.

Suddenly, a sense of urgency is in the air, and there is talk about local resilience and resilient communities. If we don't understand these concepts, and make changes necessary for a significantly different way of life, sooner or later we will be forced into facing the next level down: becoming survival communities of sorts.

The diagram tries to graph this idea. We have already missed the sustainability plateau and we are starting the descent. Maybe we can stop the fall at the resiliency plateau. If we can't, we will then face really difficult times.

By Roberto Rodriguez dela Vega
The Watershed Sentinel June-July 2008

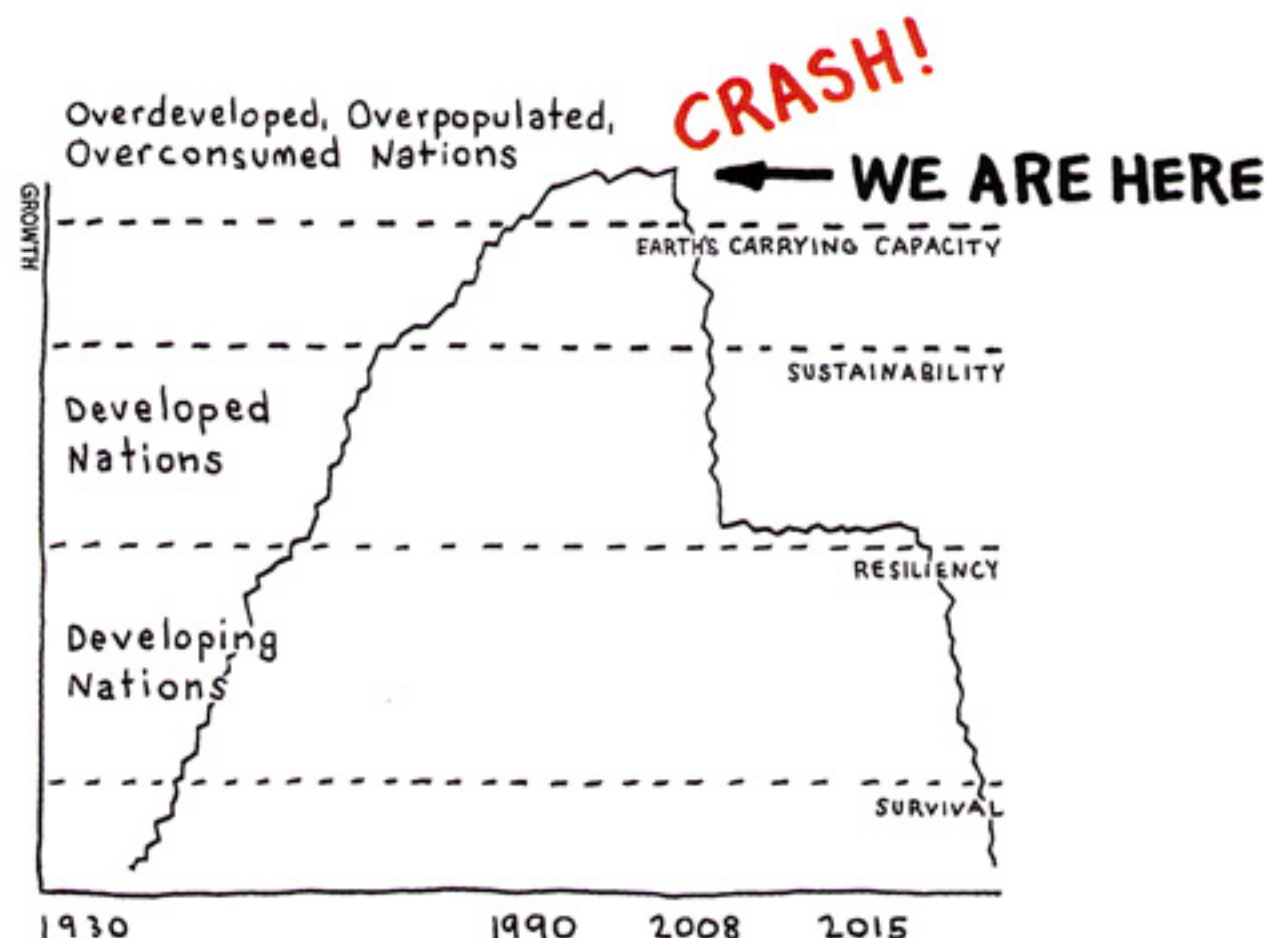
— Many of the new ideas about sustainability and resilience are nothing more than a recognition that the old ways of living are actually good, as seen today in small villages throughout Europe, Mexico, Latin America, Asia and Africa.

In our Western culture of over-consumerism, we have actually missed the opportunity of reaching any kind of sustainability. Perhaps we never have actually understood what that concept is all about. I always thought that the original sustainable development term – which was coined 20 years ago in the 1987 UN report, *Our Common Future* – was a total oxymoron.

Perhaps the main reason that we never got it, is that such a level of true understanding of what is at stake requires being proactive. We need to think about the implications of our lifestyle, think about consequences. Yikes, that is too much work, so why bother? It is easier just to keep on BAUing (Business As Usual) and pretend everything is fine.

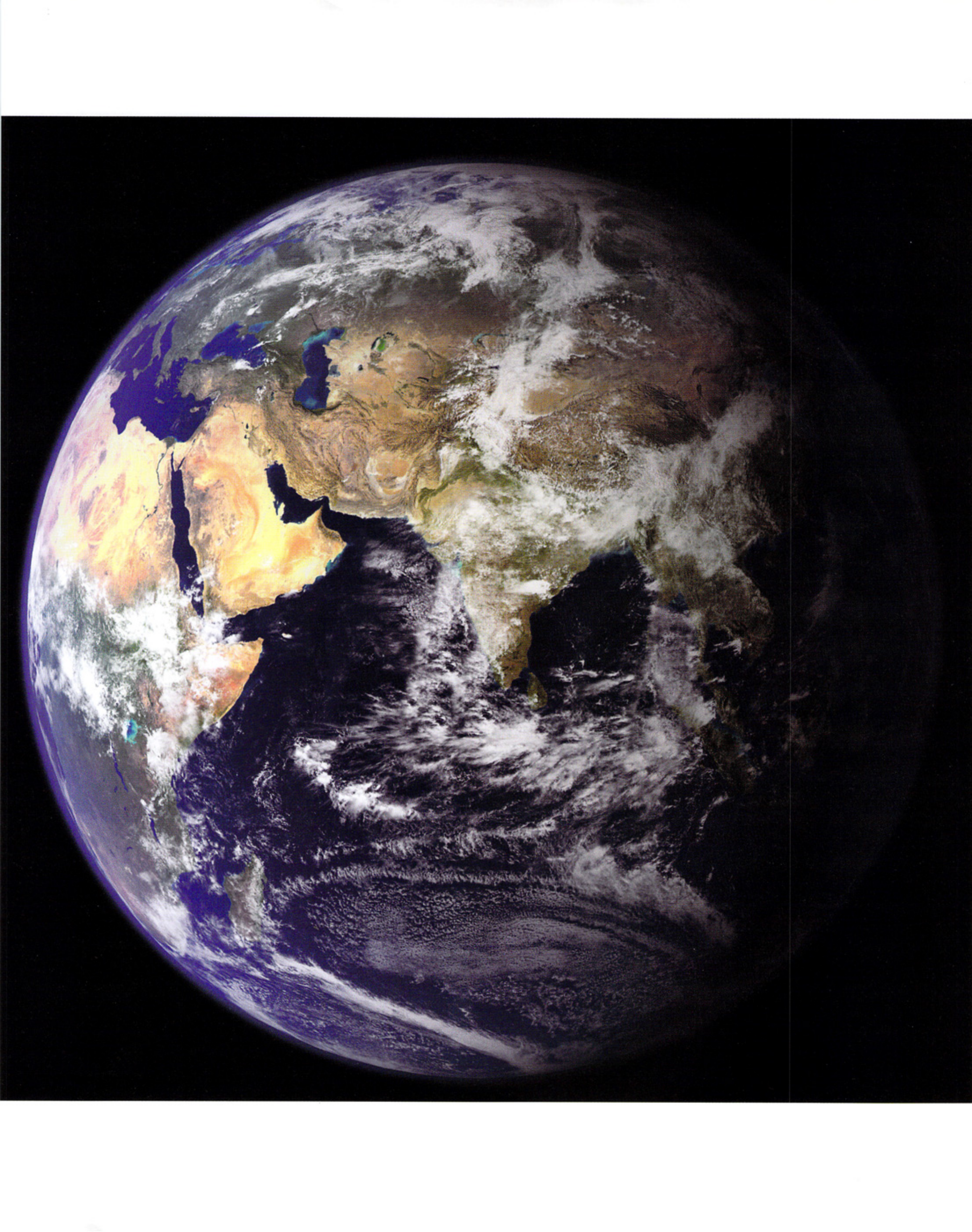
As a consequence of our inaction, we are starting to see the concept of resilience replacing sustainability as a goal.

GROWTH OF NATIONS





ZHANG CHAOXIANG
ALBUM OF A HUNDRED FLOWERS
PALACE MUSEUM, BEIJING





— “and

then I’m just going to sit.”

“Amos, I think you’ve lost it,” I say, laughing

even though I don’t want to, maybe because I’ve known

Amos since we were little and we all used to play games except for him because, he said, he was bad at pretending.

“I know it probably seems weird to you,” he continues as if he hasn’t heard me,

“but I don’t have a pill to make things alright. All I have, now and then, is this beach, and that boat. I row out there and sit, and pretend – or try to pretend – that there’s somewhere to go.”

“Somewhere to go?” But something keeps the ridicule out of my voice. “Like where?”

“It doesn’t matter,” he says. “And anyway after a while I paddle back in and go home.”

We stand there for a while and I combat my own uneasiness. I think about the glove compartment in my car, about comfort and white picket fences, that kid trying to tie his shoes, groceries, my mother laughing into the rearview mirror. Warm functionality. Amos is standing only a few feet from me, but he looks stranded and blasted by the wind.

“Well alright,” I finally say. “I’ll come with you.”

“Really?”

“Let’s go.”

We round the slope of the cliff and sure enough, there it is, a beat up old wooden boat just about big enough for two people to sit in. The back of my heel digs into the sand as we push it out into the water and clamber over the sides, grabbing the paddles. Then, just when we’ve gotten far enough that it might look, from the beach, like we’re really going somewhere, we stop. The fog is eating up the beach, but Amos looks better now. And I don’t know if I’m just seeing what I want to see, or what he wants to see, but there is a cloud or a light patch of fog or something over there, right behind his head, that looks just like an island, or a ship, in the approaching dark.

Jenny Odell is 22 years old, with a BA in English from UC Berkeley, and about to begin an MFA program in Design + Technology at the San Francisco Art Institute. Through writing, she tries to articulate and give form to the deep concerns that most people have about where we’re headed.



— close to the
water. I've never seen them
here before.

Amos stops abruptly and turns around to face me.

"Listen, Thomas," he says, and I realize I've forgotten to take my Ativan. "I wanted to come here because you're my friend. And because," he pauses and nudges a shell out of the sand with his toes, "I thought maybe the Ativan didn't work for you either."

"What?" I say. The fog is rolling in at an unnerving speed now.

"You know what it's like," he says. "Or you did, anyway. How everything was still so beautiful but you couldn't enjoy it anymore, because it felt like it was slipping out of your hands, faster and faster. It didn't matter if it was an earthquake, or a bomb, or maybe it was just people running out of something, money or water or life, gradually. A sand castle, remember, you used to tell me? I guess you probably don't want to hear this," he says, and it's true that my jaw is set and I'm casting about for something to look at, settling on a far off cloud that looks like a ship. "I guess it's pretty nice to be cured, to have all of that — the news that hasn't happened yet — so far from you now, but it's still here for me," he says, pointing at the ground. "It's in things. It's already happening. Like every time you look at things, you can already see them gone—"

"Stop," I say. I have the same impulse to listen and to cover my ears. "Would you listen to yourself? We live in Cupertino. The beige of beige. Everything's okay."

"Everything's not okay, man. I thought you knew that."

The dry mouth and sweaty palms I hated so much are starting to return, and I think of the Ativan in the car with its promise of no more questions. My heart is beating fast enough for me to remember how much I hated having to be aware of it, every hour of every day, until I took the Ativan and I could forget about it.

But Amos is right of course, and now, completely against my will, I'm remembering a dinner at a family friend's house in the Saratoga Hills when I was 17. We were having cheese fondue for dinner and chocolate fondue for dessert, and I remember that the strawberries were a little overripe and I got some chocolate on my slacks. The table, I remember too, was so beautifully laid out. The plates were gold-edged and there were these red glass cups for the tea candles and this lacy tablecloth, and food everywhere, taking up every square inch of the table with the grapes hanging right over the edge. I saw my reflection distorted in little silver bowls. And in the middle was this frosted glass vase with some calla lilies and one bird of paradise towering over the rest.

I was supposed to be making a good impression on someone, probably one of my parents' friends, or business partners. But for a moment, I couldn't concentrate. There were too many plates and too much food. There was an uneasiness that suffused everything I looked at, and I wondered where it was from, and how it had come to this table, and why we in particular were eating it, and about the garbage disposal in the kitchen at the end of the hall with the dove-shaped light fixtures, and how the leftover fruit would rot. I barely talked at all, because — how can I explain this — I couldn't get the tragedy out of the grapes, or the anxiety out of the cheese.

I'm not sure when and how it had passed; someone made a particularly good joke about how fat someone's mom was, or I was otherwise diverted. But as Amos looks at me, I think he knows this is what I'm thinking of, because I've told him the story many times.

"Around that corner," he says, and he gestures toward the part of a cliff jutting out, just touching the water, "is a boat that I sometimes use."

"A boat?" I say. I haven't been this nervous in weeks. "Since when do you have a boat? You're not planning on going out there, are you?"

"No, I'm not," he says, and looks suddenly embarrassed. There is a dirty-looking seagull looking at us, unmoving except for its feathers. "I'm going to get in, paddle out there" — he points —

— "I don't know, man. Forever. Let's see... 15 years."

"That's right."

He seems uneasy, so I ask him if he wants to stop and get some strawberries. "They're so good out here," I say. "Like something totally different from whatever it is they're selling at Safeway. Probably the way strawberries are supposed to taste, whatever that means."

We stop and buy a cardboard box of strawberries – one that holds three of those little green plastic things that strawberries come in. Then we get back on the road and eat them all without saying anything. There is something about the sight of Amos out of the corner of my eye, getting older I think – his jaw sharper, his eyes steelier? – staring toward the end of Highway 84, eating these strawberries, one two three, in a slow deliberate fashion, that is both hilarious and tragic. But what kind of thought is that? I realize that I need to take some Ativan when we get to the parking lot.

Then the ocean comes into view, white from the afternoon sun. There are no speed limits here, only fields of strawberries and the yellowest flowers I've ever seen, and a couple of forests where the bleached trunks of the bordering trees are laid bare, maybe by the wind. I nearly drive off the road looking at it, and Amos reaches out a few times to steady the wheel. Otherwise he looks out his window, not bored, but his brow is furrowed.

Then he says, "The Ativan didn't work on me."

I stop chewing for a moment. He is looking at the clock again.

"What?" I finally say.

He sighs. "It didn't work. I have some kind of..." He gestures vaguely, then fixes his gaze forward again. "It didn't work."

We cross Highway 1 and turn into the empty parking lot. Nobody goes to the beach in December, not in Northern California. If they do, it's probably not this one.

I turn the car off and sit back heavily against my carseat. "So does that mean you're still..."

"Let's get out," he says.

He shoulders his backpack and we walk across the parking lot, past the empty wooden kiosk with the slots for brochures about currents and tides and please don't step on the wildlife. The wind is picking up and pushing my hair into my eyes. We take off our shoes and put our hands against the smooth sandy stone for balance as we step carefully over pools and rocks. A stream cuts through the sand and curves around the stone slope.

"Is there any way around it?" I ask.

"No," Amos calls over his shoulder. "You have to walk across."

The temperature of the water makes me inhale sharply. "No wonder there's no god damn fish."

We get out onto the beach and I shield my eyes. The water, I remember, looks gold at this time of day in December, though the fog is beginning to come in. The sand is flat, cold, and packed.

It was always our custom to walk to the right when we got the beach, but Amos has turned left. Not that there's any difference. I have to walk a little faster to catch up with him, and I realize that I am looking at him sideways, wondering. In the midst of the epidemic, I couldn't even stomach the idea of going outside. Now here he is.

"Hey," I begin to ask.

"We're getting there," he says.

Getting where? Right as I begin to wonder if the reason the Ativan didn't work for Amos wasn't that he is just crazy, I narrowly miss stepping on a half-dead yellow jacket. They are scattered over the sand, —

— think I even know anyone who isn't on that shit," I say.

"Jesus, what a condition. I remember I couldn't even use paper towels in the bathroom without thinking about where they were going, and what about the trees. Speaking of trees, check out this one." A huge Douglas Fir comes into view as we round another sharp turn. "Anyway, I thought, alright, no more paper towels. And then every time I washed my dishes, I thought about the water I was using. So I stopped washing my dishes. Then I stopped wanting to take showers. Then, get this, there was like a 4.2 earthquake and they predicted aftershocks, and I kept having nightmares. It was sort of exponential. I just couldn't stop thinking about everything in shambles, you know? And global warming, and hurricanes, and you know how they say the honeybees are all dying and they won't be able to pollinate the crops—"

Amos cuts me off. "I know, man."

"You know. Right." I laugh and realize my knees are shaking a little bit. I remember the bottle of Ativan in the glove compartment. "Not like I hadn't felt like that before. But this was totally ridiculous. I couldn't function. Couldn't go to class. Couldn't hang out. I was scared shitless of everything that happened. The tiniest things, I kept reading things as signs of something bad. I couldn't even get drunk, man, no matter how hard I tried. I'd have shots and shots of tequila" — I looked at him — "You know me and tequila. Anyway, no dice. Just made it worse."

"Then you saw the thing on TV?" Amos says, but he isn't looking at me. He is looking out the window with a certain impatience.

"What, you in a hurry?" I ask.

We've reached a clearing at the summit. "No," he says finally. "I just get car-sick. The sooner I get out and walk around, the better."

"Alright, alright." Back into the trees, downhill. "Anyway, you know the rest of the story. Public health announcement. National paranoia epidemic." I laugh again. "Crazy shit! But what a relief, man. To have someone tell you you're not nuts. Or at least you have a good reason for it, isn't that the truth? I was so caught up with myself I didn't even notice it was happening to everyone else. I was holed up in my room eating bananas and energy bars, would you believe it?"

"I believe it," he says.

"And free Ativan. How about that," I say, tapping the door to the glove compartment. "I still can't believe how bad it got, though. Like some kind of horrible paralysis; mental, physical..." I say, realizing I don't want to talk about this anymore. "That's a barn if I ever saw one," I say, pointing.

"Listen, Thomas," says Amos, and it sounds like he's about to say something important, and then maybe he changes his mind because it's back to the same old Amos tone. "You ought to slow down around these curves."

"You're right," I say. "Sorry. Sometimes this road is so fun to drive it's like a video game or something."

"It's not a video game," he says with a touch of vehemence.

"Look, is there something you need to get off your chest?" I say, glancing between him and the road. "You a little late on one of your doses?"

He doesn't answer.

The road flattens into its last stretches, with the occasional hand-painted sign for pumpkins and strawberries, but there is no one outside. I strain my eyes to see if there is fog at the end of the road or not.

"How long have we known each other, Thomas?" Amos asks. I don't know what's made him so talkative all a sudden. —

— him incredulously when he doesn't say anything. "How the hell are you?"

"Good," he answers. "I'm good, man."

"What's that?" I ask, nodding toward the backpack he is trying to shove into the floor space beneath the dashboard. "A picnic?"

"Just sunscreen and stuff."

I check my mirrors, turn my head and back out of the driveway. "Well, I'm glad you're good. I am, anyway. God, it's great that all that shit is over."

"Yeah, about that—"

"Jesus!" A blur of red nearly misses the back of the car. "Fucking Camaros. What freeway am I getting on, by the way? I can't remember the directions — it's been a long time."

"280 North," Amos says.

"280 North," I repeat, turning onto Finch Avenue, "named the World's Most Beautiful Freeway."

"Is that right?"

We pass a kite fair on the football field of our old high school. In ten minutes the city has disappeared and we've joined a fixed flow of cars evenly spread over the wide 280 North, bounded only by yellow hills, black-green trees and that temple up there on the hill.

"Cows," I say, pointing to some black and brown ones under a tree.

Amos nods and changes the radio station.

"Geologists blame among other things a warming climate, altering the landscape and perhaps the availability of water to high-elevation ecosystems," says a woman on BBC. "Collier is shrinking faster than most of the 35 glaciers in the state. 'Now everything is just in a chaotic shrink,' Bishop says."

"Hey," I say, changing it back. "You can be in charge of the radio when it's your car."

The landscape is opening up. How can I describe it — the dry grass and the foothills that turn into blue mountains, and how all of it looks so perfectly big and self-justified. It seems unchanged from the first time I went on this drive as a kid in the backseat, small and trusting. Even the birds seem frozen in the sky.

"Where were you last night, man?" I ask. "I didn't see you at South Seas."

"Busy doing nothing."

"What an Amos answer," I say. "You missed out on an excellent rendition of our old song."

"What song is that?"

"Fuck 'em all, fuck 'em all..." I begin to sing, but Amos looks annoyed, so I stop. Ever since I met him when we were seven, he was the sullen guy. You know, *that* guy, the token melancholy one that people like to have around anyway because he's smart and funny in a dry sort of way, and sometimes if you can get him drunk, he loosens up a little. He hasn't changed since he's been at Princeton; if anything, he's become even more like he already was.

Now he's changed the radio back to BBC. "Fish and plants in this 6,000 square mile 'Dead Zone' have been devastated, leaving the waters incapable of sustaining many types of aquatic life," says a different woman.

"Dude," I say. I shoot him a look and change it back.

"Take this exit," he says, pointing to Sand Hill Road. We're heading straight for the mountains now.

"Horses," I say, pointing again. "Who do you think rides them?"

"Rich kids," he says without hesitation. "Turn right up here."

The road narrows and begins to work up the side of the mountain in a series of hairpin turns with 15 mph speed limit signs.

"Come onnn, little Corolla," I say, shifting into second. My windshield is dusty and every time we emerge from a patch of redwood cover, the sunlight makes it hard to see. "How are your parents?" I ask, squinting forward. "How'd they do with the whole mess?"

"They're fine."

"Ativan?"

"Yeah. Both of them."

"Yeah. I don't —"

IT'S BEEN TWO WEEKS SINCE THEY DECLARED

the epidemic over. People are out again, driving around, taking tango lessons at the YMCA behind the Target. Afterwards, they have large ice-blended matcha green tea lattes at Peet's Coffee and compliment each other's babies, and say, "Geez, where did you get that stroller? Ikea?" And then someone says something witty that makes everyone laugh, even the barista.

Everyone has turned on their TVs again. At night, driving through Rancho Rinconada, Champagne Fountain — neighborhoods slumbering in the poplar trees — the glow is now visible through the curtains and open windows — now blue, now white, behind the silhouettes of heads on couches. "Well, what do you know, Zach!" says one news anchor to the other during a feature on a Sunshine Biscuits factory. "I guess that's just how the cookie crumbles!"

In celebration, the city of Cupertino, California has planned a series of festivals at Memorial Park. On top of the regular *Shakespeare in the Park*, there are food festivals, music festivals and festivals that don't seem to have any designation except that people drink beer out of clear plastic cups while their children have strawberries painted on their faces, glitter included. Meanwhile, people swear to each other that the trees look greener than ever, while their dogs sniff each other.

At Trader Joe's, everyone is buying groceries with gusto, throwing them into their carts without even looking at the ingredients. We're all winking at each other. Get that! Total strangers, winking. I am buying six packages of microwaveable chicken tikka masala because I don't even have a list this time. We are shopping with glorious abandon.

Later, I'm at South Seas with some of my friends from high school who are back for winter break, too. It appears that none of us have forgotten the drinking song we used to sing at someone's house after finals, except that it now seems to have taken on a different meaning:

Fuck 'em all, fuck 'em all,
The long and the short and the tall.
Fuck all the teachers and the TAs too,
Fuck the principals and the whole God-damn crew.
So we're saying goodbye to them all,
As back to our dive bars we crawl.
We'll start a commotion this side of the ocean,
So cheer up, my lads, fuck 'em all.

It's an unusually sunny and arid day for December. A windows-down, blast-anything-that-sounds-good type of day. I'm driving under the speed limit, appreciating the two-story houses, the lawns and the manicured shrubbery, the sprinklers, the collared dogs. Outside on the sidewalk there is a little boy in a matching SpongeBob outfit, trying to tie his shoes.

I pull into the driveway of Amos' house and honk. Nothing happens and I honk some more. Finally the heavy wooden door swings open and I see his scruffy head poke out.

"Amos, you motherfucker," I yell, grinning. "Get in the car."

He comes down the steps in that slumpy way of his, then slides into the seat next to me with a huge backpack.

"Well?" I ask. I slap him on the shoulder and look at —



A FLOWERING OF MEANING —

— The United States has had a difficult time coming to terms with the media shift. After 9/11 and during the Iraq War, the US government accused Al Jazeera of broadcasting propaganda and allegedly targeted its journalists. On the day Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez announced the launching of Telesur, US Congress approved a program to send radio and television broadcasts into Venezuela in order to counter the station's supposed "anti-Americanism."

But it seems the more the US pushes, the more the world resists. No longer content consuming Western views on Western channels, the world's population is now turning on their own media and finding a new understanding, a new meaning and a new world.

Sean Condon

— pean media, for a Western audience. But as Palestinian journalist In'am El Obeidi pointed out, the second intifada in 2000 was covered by an Arab media whose journalists "were formed of locals, as familiar with the history of the conflict as they were with people's feelings and culture... For the first time, Palestinians felt that they were no longer subjects of an outside narrator. They felt that their story was being told and narrated by themselves."

The rise of the international media is having a important effect in helping change the world's balance and tone. Where once American and British voices drowned out all the others, the growth of the international 24-hour cable news channel is finally giving the rest of the world its own platform. Not only can Asia, Africa and South America now tell its side of the story, it can challenge Western claims and assumptions.

During the Gulf War, CNN and BBC were the only television stations with correspondents in Baghdad, which meant the entire world watched a war in the Middle East on two Western stations. But for the Iraq War, at a time when the Western media was banging the war drum the loudest, Al Jazeera provided the world with critical coverage of the American- and British-led invasion. Just when Western powers were trying to silence the Arab world, Al Jazeera gave it a voice.

"During the Iraq war, American media voices no longer held the world's attention by default, and those who made the case for American policy encountered opposition that was loud, persistent, and far-reaching," wrote Philip Seib in *Hegemonic No More: Western Media, the Rise of Al-Jazeera and the Influence of Diverse Voices*. —

— **W**hen US Marine-turned-journalist John Rushing covered the Virginia Tech shootings for Al Jazeera, he lined up with a group of American television journalists as they prepared to file their live reports. At the top of the hour, the Americans all led off their newscasts with the story of how Seung-Hui Cho sent tapes of himself to NBC, but Rushing stood waiting for his cue.

After finishing their report, the journalists took off their microphones and walked away. Rushing continued to wait. While the Cho tapes was the top story across the United States, Al Jazeera led its newscast with a story about a series of car bombs in Baghdad that killed 225 people, and followed it with stories about the Nigerian presidential elections and the flare-up of fighting in Mogadishu. Virginia Tech was the fourth story.



"You have to realize, on a week when the news hardly mentions anything but Anna Nicole Smith, there are events happening around the world," Rushing told *The Daily Show's* Jon Stewart when explaining the difference between Al Jazeera and the American media's priorities.

While CNN and BBC once dominated the world's airwaves, an international audience frustrated by the Western media's bias and banality can now turn on their own news channels. Along with Al Jazeera, stations like Latin America's Telesur, France Monde, Russia Today and Iran's Press TV have all emerged over the past decade as competitors to the Western media's supremacy. In India, there are more than 20 all-news cable stations. In Southeast Asia, there is a flourishing network of blogs and news websites that bypass their countries' censored press. No longer forced to view their world through a Western lens, a thriving international media is providing the world with a new awareness, and, with it, a new meaning.

The first Palestinian intifada was primarily covered by the American and Euro —

— looming dark in the background. Millions of extra vehicles on the already crowded Indian roads would mean a huge increase in noise and air pollution. As India's economy continues to soar, the number of Indian drivers is already expected to grow from seven in 1,000 today to 11 in 1,000 by 2010. (In China, 1,000 cars are added to already gridlocked traffic every day). The chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Rajendra Pachauri, said the Nano was giving him "nightmares" and that it would bankrupt India's environmental policy.

While the Nano produces lower emissions than any other car in India (and less than the average Volkswagen), the fact that it will allow millions more people to take up a form of transportation that is one of the leading causes of global warming could be extremely dangerous. For every gallon of gas used by a car, 8.8 kilograms of carbon dioxide are emitted into the atmosphere.

Add in the many indirect costs — waste of land, energy and resources, noise pollution, costs for traffic infrastructure, safety concerns and the loss of amenities — and the millions of Nanos that will hit city streets around the world may do more harm than good.

The Nano puts Western environmentalists in a bind. On the one hand, the tiny car offers motorized mobility to the masses — a privilege enjoyed by the West for more than a half-century with little concern for the consequences. But, on the other hand, if the car accelerates the effects of climate change and global warming, it would outweigh any of the social benefits the car purports to provide. The people in the West can only wait and see how Asia manages its growth. In the meantime, they should come to grips with the fact that, for the first time, they are not in the driver's seat.

Shira Bick

THINK



REALLY SMALL.

— When Indian automotive manufacturer Tata Motors announced in 2005 its plan to build a car that would cost less than \$4,000, automotive giants from Japan, Germany and the United States ridiculed the idea. Three years later, the Nano car — priced at \$2,500 — was unveiled at the New Delhi Auto Show to thousands of astonished onlookers.

The Nano is being trumpeted as the world's cheapest car, but its significance and impact extend far beyond its price. This little car represents the emergence of India as an independent player on the world's economic stage, but also throws a giant monkey wrench into the fight against climate change.

For years, India's manufacturing plants operated primarily for the purpose of churning out cheaply made, cookie-cutter goods for Western corporations. But as a new global economy emerges, the old colonial power structure is beginning to shift and India — along with China and Brazil — is now poised to take on the West in the global marketplace.

Given the Nano's price tag, millions of Indian families will now be able to enter a new social realm — that of the middle-class car owner. And should the market for the Nano spread to Southeast Asia, China and even South America, millions more will be able to join their ranks. Tata Motors has the potential to completely democratize car ownership by reformulating a purported "status symbol," making it attainable to the masses.

It's somewhat ironic that this car may also thrive in the West. In recent years, as the price of mass market cars has steadily increased, buying rates amongst middle-class Americans and Europeans have stagnated. At the same time, a growing lower-class is also clamoring for a more affordable automobile. Enter the Nano — and with it, a chance for India to gain a foothold in the West's automotive industry.

But even as India is taking its bow on the world stage, the environmental and social concerns surrounding this mini-car are —

FOR THE SMALL PURCHASES OF DAILY LIFE -

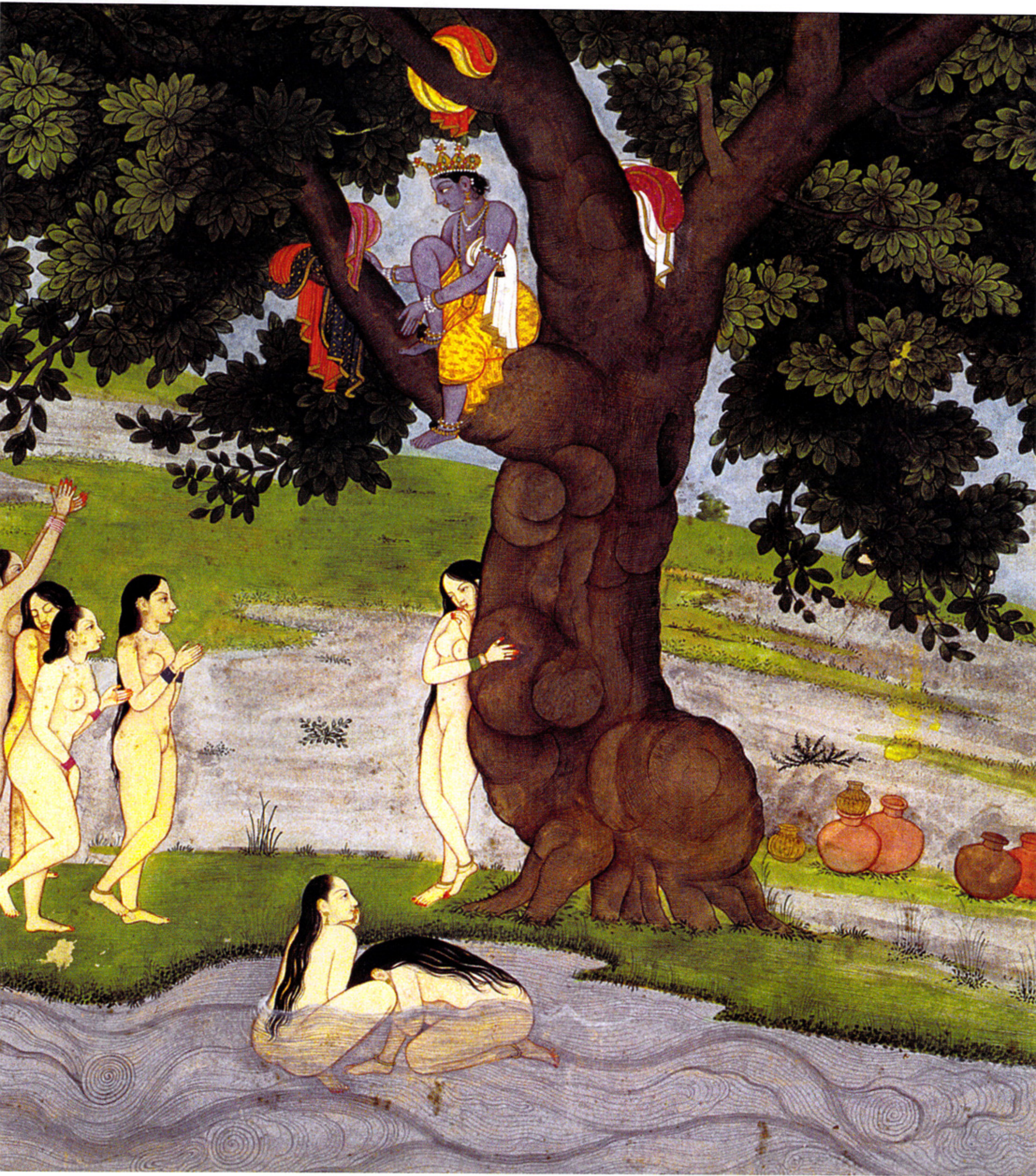


-These small bags were an accidental wealth of information in India. Everyday purchases were whisked away in carryalls made from old textbooks and magazines – allowing shoppers to become emerged in an impromptu lesson on national history, human anatomy, religious theory or something equally as fascinating.

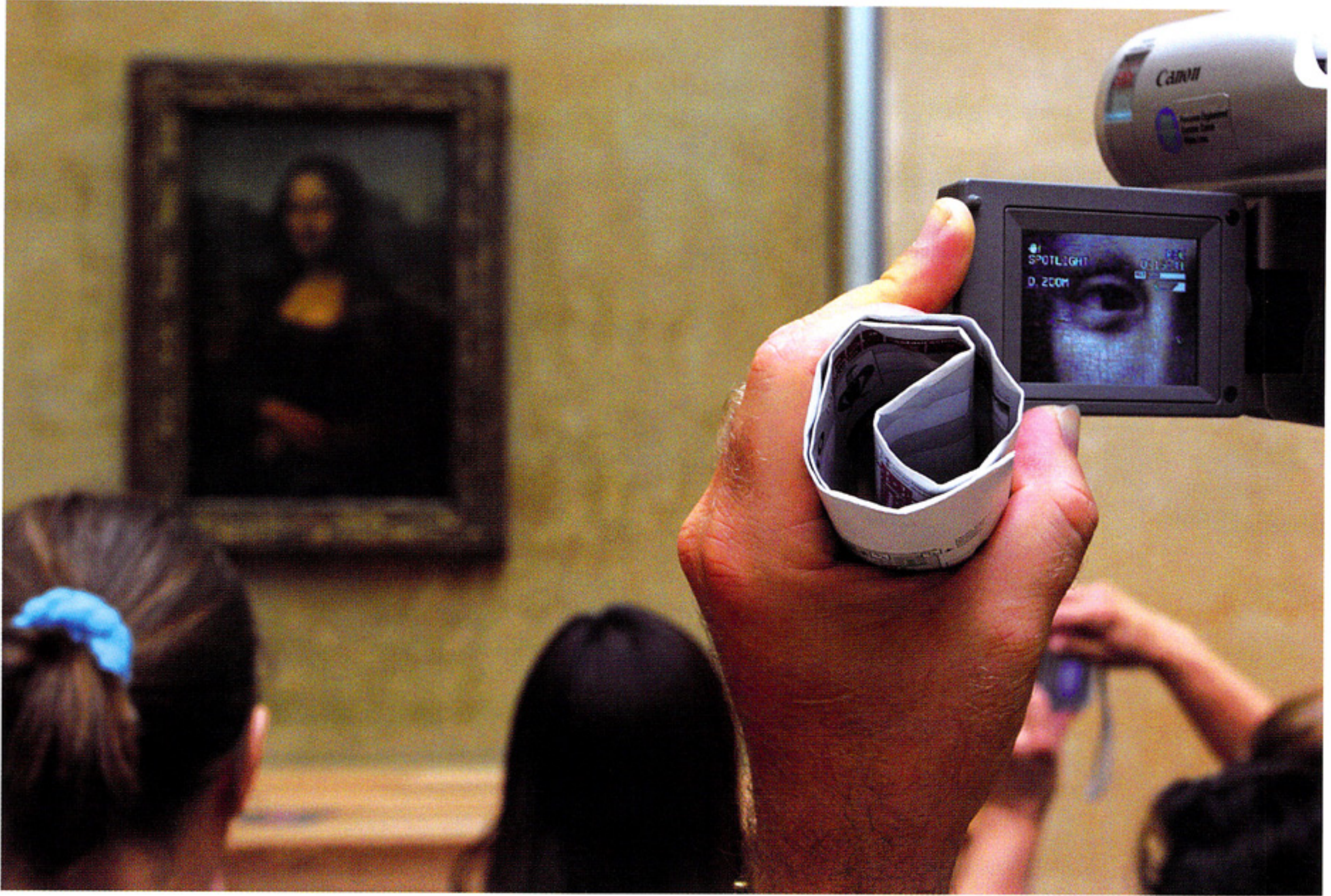


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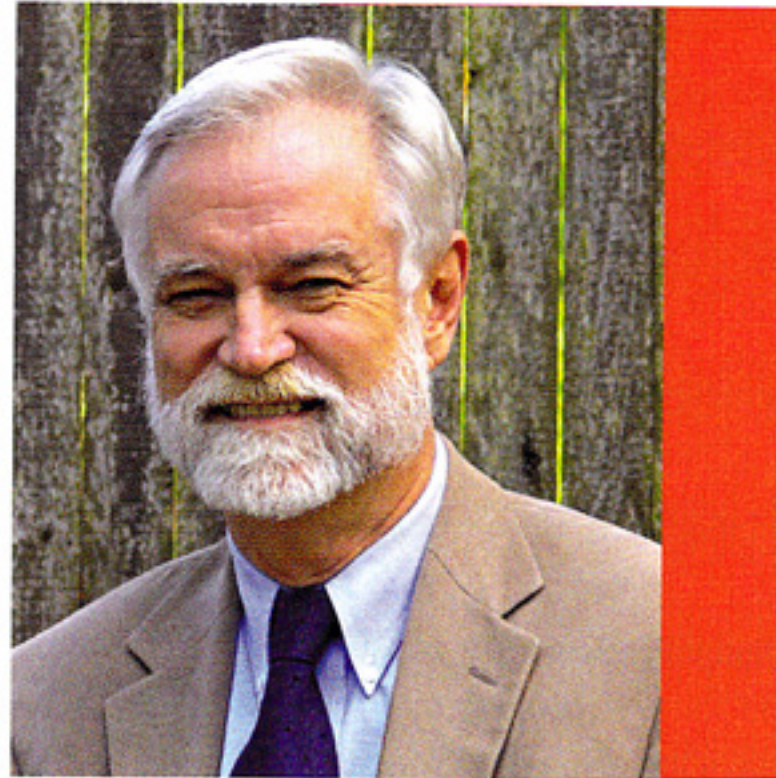
सुंदरता





Robyn Meredith –
The Elephant and the Dragon:
The Rise of India and China and What
It Means for All of Us

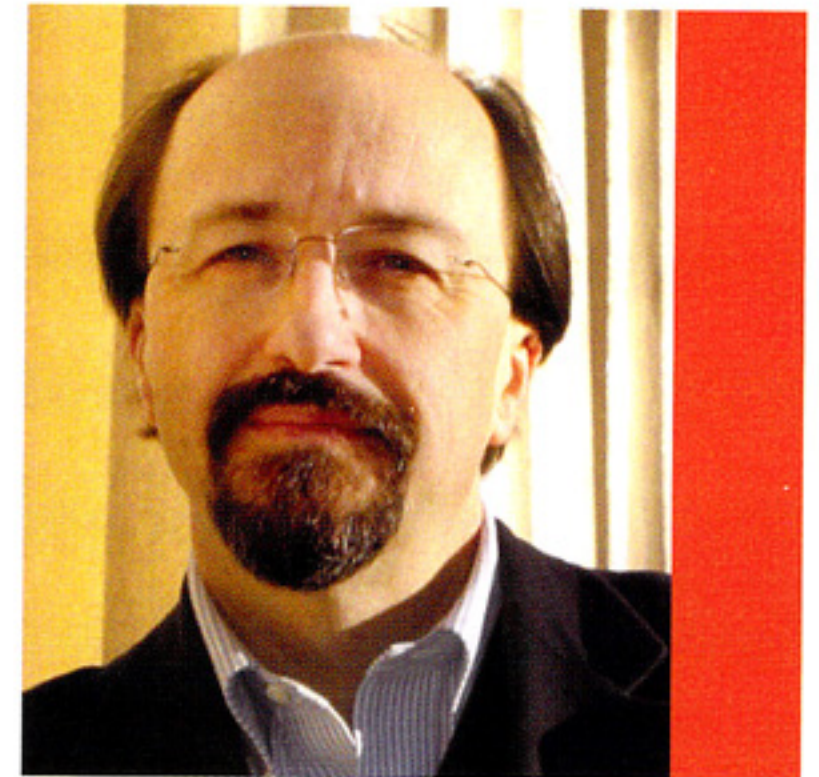
Everybody talks about Chinese exports and how it seems that everything is exported and built in China these days, but what we forget is that it's American companies, or Canadian companies, or European companies or Japanese companies that own those factories in China that are churning out exports, or who hire Chinese companies to build their products for them. That distinction is important because it means that the lion's share of the profit from those Chinese factories is actually in foreign hands. China has become the factory to the world but it doesn't own the factories. In that way, I think that the economic rivalry is overblown. There definitely is increased competition from China but it's also a lot of competition from the US firms or Canadian firms competing with others who have moved operations to China.



Robert Nadeau –
The Environmental Endgame:
Mainstream Economics, Ecological
Disaster and Human Survival

China is facing a huge water crisis that is going to result in dramatic reductions in the availability of food. We've already seen how oil prices are driving food commodities to unprecedented levels now. If China is in a situation where it cannot support its own people with foodstuffs and cannot, in the global market, purchase large amounts of foodstuffs, then there's going to be an enormous unrest in that country and its economic position will change radically.

So all these rosy predictions about China becoming a player in the international community, in the global market system and potentially displacing the United States, are just futuristic nonsense because none of those scenarios take into account the environmental impacts of the business-as-usual scenario.



Bill Emmott –
Rivals: How the Power Struggle
Between China, India and Japan Will
Shape Our Next Decade

While one might think of the rise of Asia as being at the West's expense, the likelihood of conflict between Asian countries is higher than between any Asian country and the United States or Europe. There are a number of regional flashpoints – the Korean peninsula, Tibet, the Indian-Chinese border – and the potential for the firing of weapons is very high.

There's a lot of hostility and a lot of animosity, particularly between Japan and China. It's not necessarily popular to cooperate and there's a big resistance to allowing the other party to get a hold of national assets. Over the next five to ten years, the way in which these countries are going to be developing and modernizing their militaries is very much geared to a sense of rivalry with one another. That doesn't mean something will boil over, but there is some danger of a self-fulfilling prophecy – the more you see someone as a threat, the more they become a threat.

Over the past few years, there has been an explosion of literature examining how the rise of the East and decline of the West will shape our next century. From Fareed Zakaria's *The Post-American World* to Kishore Mahbubani's *The New Asian Hemisphere*, a great debate has been unleashed about what the new global order will look like and which countries will claim dominance. In order to gain a deeper perspective on the magnitude of this complex challenge, *Adbusters* talked with some of the leading authors who have tackled the world's next culture clash.

On China

China is already reforming and modernizing itself very quickly and has been doing so for literally a decade. The race is not against the idea of defending autocracy against democracy. The race is actually an internal one. China doesn't really care what outsiders think. They care when you have a useful model they can steal or borrow from and they do plenty of that.

Progressive people in China talk about how in the year 2050 they'll have something of a bicameral British style parliamentary system. And they're going to do it at their own speed. The only thing radical that happens in Chinese history is collapse, and the goal is to avoid that by any means.

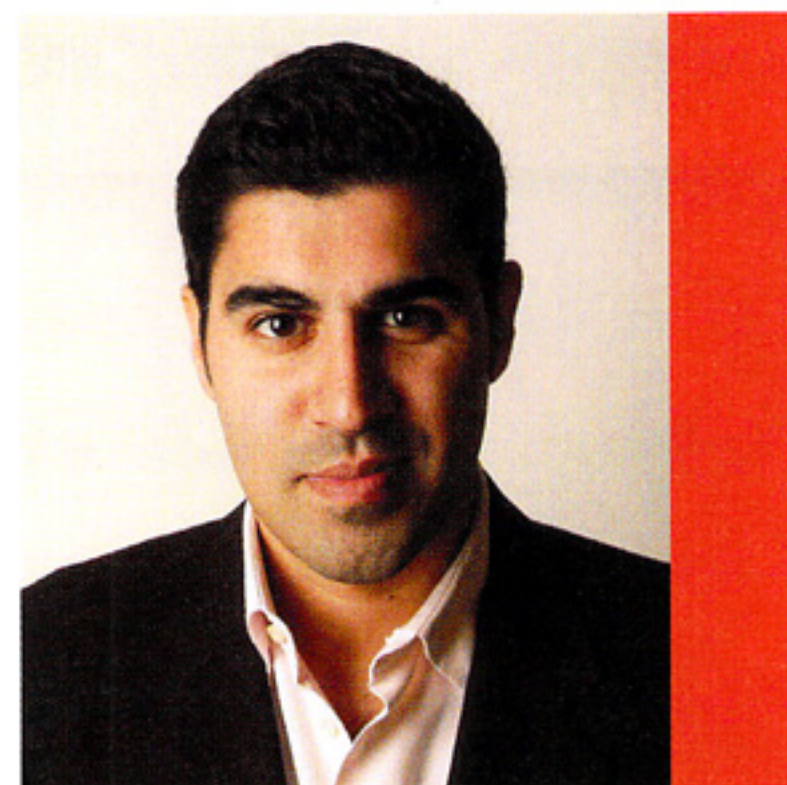
On America's Decline

All of the things that we look at today – the strengthening of China, skepticism of the West – were all things that were happening before 9/11. We're talking about things that are more than a decade old, and it's just that people didn't notice them until more recently. As much as I agree that America is resented, I disagree that that resentment necessarily translates into diminished influence. The influence is diminishing anyway. It has been diminishing all along, we just chose not to notice because the world didn't feel dangerous and it didn't feel anti-American the way it does now.

On Europe

Europe could be more powerful if it was more unified. But despite its lack of unity in the hierarchical sense, of a single capital and voice, it still manages to achieve a great deal of influence – it is the largest economy of the world, is the largest investor in the world and the largest importer of goods. It's still putting together a common army; it runs peacekeeping missions; it does all of these things despite lacking a certain amount of unity.

It is a twenty-first century, postmodern creation and I think that's actually one of its greatest strengths, not necessarily weaknesses. I have a colleague who says, "Europe has 27 brains and we only have one." And to some extent that's true. You actually have to have a lot of different economic models, in Europe, many of which are far more successful in terms of delivering welfare and growth than the United States.

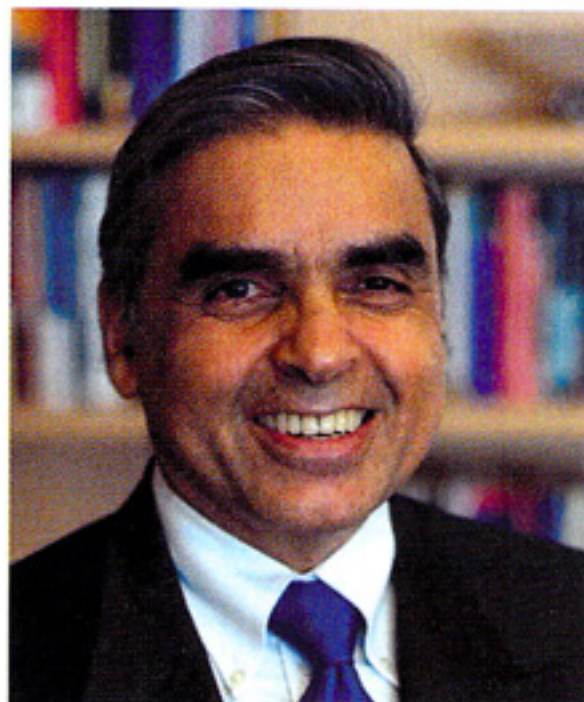


Parag Khanna –
Second World: Empires and Influence
in the New Global Order

On the New Global Order

A lot of people have interpreted my book as 'China up, America down,' as if there has to be one winner or one leader. What I always try to say is this is not a book about the Pacific replacing the Atlantic, or China replacing America, or about Second World countries. Rather it's about all of these things happening at the same time.

DON'T YOU LECTURE ME —



—**K**ishore Mahbubani recently created fervor with his new book, *The New Asian Hemisphere: The Irresistible Shift of Power to the East*. He cautions the West to rethink its position as the exemplar of human rights and democracy. The following transcript is from BBC's *Hardtalk* with Stephen Sackur on April 28, 2008.

HARDTALK:

The leader of the very small opposition party in Singapore has been financially ruined, he has been declared bankrupt because when he chose to criticize Lee Kuan Yew and other political leaders, he was sued for defamation. Human Rights Watch, in its latest report for 2008, says that in Singapore, draconian defamation laws are wielded as a political weapon. Now, is this the Asian model that you believe is going to dominate the twenty-first century?

KISHORE MAHBUBANI:

Do you mind if I give you a very tough response, because you ask me a very tough question? Because your tough questions imply that the gold standard on human rights today exists in the West. And the rest of the world has got to rise up and conform to the gold standard the West sets.

You know, there have been two great leaps in human rights in human history. First was the abolition of slavery, second was the abolition of torture. If you had [told] me ten years ago, that the first modern, developed country to reintroduce torture would be the great beacon of freedom and democracy, which is the United States of America, I would have said no way. Because America stands for freedom and democracy. It would never allow torture to come back. Guess what? The first modern, developed country to reintroduce torture is the United States of America.

Because between implementing torture and defamation law, there's a thousand miles that separate them. And guess what? The European countries that gave the world a very hard time on human rights issues kept absolutely silent. There's not one European government that criticized the United States for its torture.

HT: That's completely not true.

KM: If you go to the UN commission on Human Rights, you find me one statement by a European government officially criticizing Guantánamo. You will find none. And the rest of the world is becoming a much more intelligent place. The 5.6 billion people in the world, who are passengers on the bus of human history, will no longer accept lectures from the West on human rights issues until you clean up your act.

HT: See, you based your entire answer on a current practice in the United States which you choose to call torture. I'm not here to defend the US or make any comment on the US. My question wasn't about the US, it's about Asia and it's about your commitment to public freedom of expression to what we call a human rights agenda. China clearly isn't committed at the moment, Singapore isn't committed in any way that we would recognize. My question is, how can you convince me, if Asia is indeed a coming power in the twenty-first century, how can you convince me that Asia is going to adopt a genuine human rights agenda?

KM: Your question is about how we judge society. The assumption in your question is that we have certain standards by how we judge Western society and you're saying that Asia is not getting it and basically the West is getting it. You are obviously completely out of touch with how the world sees the West today. You have no idea of how the perception of the West has changed completely. Western commentators continue to give lectures to the rest of the world and you've become the laughingstock of the world. And [the West], the moment they get the slightest hint of insecurity, guess what? They practice torture, they run away from civil liberties, European countries allow rendition programs through air flights.

What right do they have to lecture the rest of the world on human rights? Actually, the advances in human rights today are being made in Asia. And guess what? The retreat on human rights is being made in the West. You think the rest of the world cannot see it? You should look at the rising levels of education in the world. Believe me, one of the key things in my book is about the hundreds of millions of people being educated. And in this much more educated universe, they look at the West and say, "Come on, when will these guys wake up and see the real world for what it is?" We are moving forward and you are moving backwards.

— different civilizational coordinates and its modernity will be very different from that of the West. That is what makes China's rise the most remarkable and far-reaching historical change since Britain's industrial revolution at the end of the eighteenth century.

What will China's difference mean? Ever since the seventeenth century, countries have increasingly defined themselves by the European template of the nation-state. China does too, at least on the surface. But deep down it is no such thing. China is the world's oldest country, dating back at least to 221 BC. The bundle of characteristics which the Chinese see as defining what it means to be Chinese – ideographic language, the family, customs, ancestral worship, food, guanxi et al – long predate China's belated emergence as a nation-state after the 1911 revolution. China is a civilization-state masquerading as a nation-state, which is going to present China and the world with a very tricky problem of mutual comprehension. We are so used to living in a Western-made world that we naturally take it for granted. We shouldn't, because in time China will increasingly leave its imprint on the world, just as the United States does and Britain did before her.

The question that must concern us all is, how will the US respond to China's rise? History is not an encouraging guide: top dogs never cede their power and privilege without a fight. The US has become addicted to having, and needing, an enemy; and at some point China may well find itself cast in that role. The fact that China is so culturally different from the US, moreover, has the potential to create a minefield of misunderstanding and an even more fraught relationship. As George Bush's absurd expectations of US power so graphically illustrate, America is utterly unprepared for a world in which it is no longer the dominant power: it has barely given any thought to the question, not even in its nightmares.

Martin Jacques is a columnist for The Guardian and visiting fellow at the Asia Research Centre, London School of Economics

— You may remember that the War on Terror was supposed to be the great new global divide. It was, of course, a neo-con invention that will earn little more than a footnote in history. Instead, the defining trend of our time is the decline of the West and the rise of the East, which has morphed into the decline of the United States and the rise of China. When the US invaded Iraq in 2003, the neocons still seemed to think that the new century would be American. Never underestimate the ability of political leaders, even of the most powerful nation on Earth, to get history so monumentally wrong.

China is predicted to overtake the US as the world's biggest economy in 2027. Its population of 1.4 billion combined with a double-digit growth rate is changing the world at a speed and to an extent never witnessed before. China is the reason why the prices of so many consumer products have fallen in the first decade of this century; it is also the reason why commodity prices, most notably oil and food, have been rising for the same period, and now at an alarming rate.

China's rise has already started to reconfigure global politics – becoming the new powerbroker in Africa, South America and East Asia. But the wider political and cultural implications of China's transformation have been almost disregarded, as if China will simply be another chip off the old Western block. Why should anyone think that China will be like the West? This is Western deceit; the belief chiselled and refined over two centuries that being modern is synonymous with being Western. China comes from entirely –



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SILK EMBROIDERY ON COTTON

**– top dogs never cede their power
and privilege without a fight –**



DEFT MOVES AT THE U.N. —

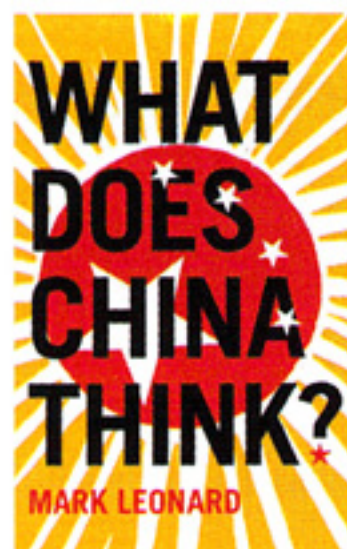


Rights Council. This subtle diplomacy has been devastatingly effective – contributing to a massive fall in US influence: in 1995 the USA won 50.6 percent of the votes in the United Nations general assembly; by 2006, the figure had fallen to just 23.6 percent. On human rights, the results are even more dramatic: China's win-rate has rocketed from 43 per cent to 82 percent, while the USA's has tumbled from 57 per cent to 22 per cent. *The New York Times'* UN correspondent James Traub has detected a paradigm shift in the United Nations' operations: 'it's a truism that the Security Council can function only insofar as the United States lets it. The adage may soon be applied to China as well.' Traub may be right. China's capacity to influence the United Nations is increasing, and soon we may be complaining about Chinese behaviour on big policy issues, rather than saying 'if only the USA would act differently'.

—The United Nations is becoming a powerful amplifier of the Chinese world-view. Unlike Russia, which comports itself with a swagger – enjoying its ability to overtly frustrate US and EU plans – China tends to opt for a conciliatory posture. It is prepared to veto things when it has to, but it prefers to hide behind others, and block things without getting the blame. In the run-up to the Iraq War, although China opposed military action, it allowed France, Germany and Russia to lead the international opposition to it. In 2005 when there was a debate about enlarging the United Nations Security Council, China encouraged African countries to demand their own seat with a veto which effectively killed off Japan's bid for a permanent Security Council seat. Equally, Beijing has been willing to allow the Organization of Islamic States to take the lead in weakening the new Human

聪明的战术

Mark Leonard's book, published by Perseus Books, is an insightful and provoking journey into one of the most important and least understood countries of our time.





YUE MINJUN

UNTITLED

2005

OIL ON CANVAS

170 x 140 CM

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND AW ASIA, NEW YORK

— Another possibility is 'super-terrorism'. In a prescient passage, the authors predicted attacks like Osama bin Laden's on the World Trade Center two years before they took place. They correctly foresaw that the response of the USA to the attacks would be more damaging to the country's security than the attacks themselves: 'it often makes an adversary which uses conventional forces and conventional measures as its main combat strength look like a big elephant charging into a china shop. It is at a loss as to what to do, and unable to make use of the power it has.'

The most interesting thesis is the idea that China could use international law as a weapon, or 'Lawfare' for short. The authors argue that citizens of democracies increasingly demand that their countries uphold international rules, particularly ones that govern human rights and the conduct of war. Governments are, therefore, constrained by regional or worldwide organizations, such as the European Union, ASEAN, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the WTO and the United Nations. The authors argue that China should copy the European model of using international law to pin down the USA: 'there are far-sighted big powers which have clearly already begun to borrow the power of supra-national, multinational, and non-state players to redouble and expand their own influence'. They think that China could turn the United Nations and regional organizations into an amplifier of the Chinese world-view – discouraging the USA from using its might in campaigns like the Iraq War.

— stake, Beijing's audacious plan is to blind American troops by taking away their satellite intelligence. Beijing hopes, thereby, to make it impossible for the USA to get involved in a conflict over Taiwan or Japan.

The most interesting aspects of China's attempt to become an 'asymmetric super-power' are outside the realm of conventional military power. The most detailed explanation of this approach came in a book called *Unrestricted Warfare*, which shot into the Chinese bestsellers' lists in 2001. This book, written by two People's Liberation Army colonels, attracted attention only among specialists when it was first published in 1999. However, after Osama bin Laden's attack on the World Trade Center, its thesis seemed visionary. It argues that the American obsession with military hardware is the country's greatest weakness, blinding its policy-makers to the wider picture of military strategy, which must include the use of economic, legal and political weapons as well. The book sets out a series of strategies for 'non-military warfare' arguing that 'soldiers do not have the monopoly of war'.

Top of their list is 'economic warfare'. Referring to the Asian financial crisis of 1997, the authors speak with awe about the power of international financiers like George Soros to undermine the economies of the so-called 'Asian Tigers': 'Economic prosperity that once excited the constant admiration of the Western world changed to a depression, like the leaves of a tree that are blown away in a single night by the autumn wind. 'If a lone individual like Soros could unleash so much destruction simply for profit, how much damage could a proud nation like China inflict on the USA with its trillion dollars of foreign reserves? —

THE MANY FACETS OF UNRESTRICTED WARFARE

Military

- Atomic warfare
- Conventional warfare
- Bio-chemical warfare
- Ecological warfare
- Space warfare
- Electronic warfare
- Guerilla warfare
- Terrorist warfare

Trans-Military

- Diplomatic warfare
- Network warfare
- Intelligence warfare
- Psychological warfare
- Tactical warfare
- Smuggling warfare
- Drug warfare
- Virtual warfare (deterrence)

Non-Military

- Financial warfare
- Trade warfare
- Resources warfare
- Economic aid warfare
- Regulatory warfare
- Sanction warfare
- Media warfare
- Ideological warfare

UNRESTRICTED WARFARE —

超限战

— It has become a truism in Chinese circles that the former Soviet Union spent itself into oblivion by being lured into a competition for military primacy. So rather than trying to match the USA's military machine plane for plane and bomb for bomb, the Chinese approach is to go for an 'asymmetrical' strategy of finding and exploiting the enemy's soft spots. 'Asymmetric warfare' has been vogueish in Western military circles for a long time. It has traditionally been used to describe how terrorists can take on and defeat standing armies, in the same way that David took on Goliath. However, the Chinese have taken this debate far beyond the techniques of terrorism. Chinese intellectuals and military planners have created a cottage industry of devising strategies for defeating a 'technologically superior opponent' (their preferred euphemism for the USA).

Every year, Chinese military spending goes up by over 10 percent (American intelligence estimates that the real figure is two to three times higher) to fulfil the country's great power aspirations. However, its military modernization — which has seen it building ships and submarines, buying fourth-generation combat aircraft and aiming 900 ballistic missiles at Taiwan — has not been about trying to copy or match the US military. The goal is, instead, to find cheaper ways of neutralizing the USA's military advantage. Instead of rivalling the USA on its own ground, Beijing wants to play the Americans at a different game that Beijing can win.

For example, on Taiwan, rather than vainly seeking military supremacy of the Taiwan Strait, Beijing has sought to increase the price the USA would have to pay to defend the island in a war. Twenty years ago the USA could have adopted a purely defensive strategy by creating a shield around the island. As a result of China's military modernization, this defensive strategy is now unsustainable. Now the USA would be put in the unenviable position of needing to attack mainland China to defend Taiwan.

China's activities in space have followed a similar pattern. Beijing's goal is not to launch a series of 'Star Wars' against the USA. Instead, it has sought to undermine the US military doctrine by developing weapons which could destroy the satellites which provide so much of the USA's military intelligence. Like Odysseus, who overcame the Cyclops by blinding him with a burning —



THE WHIMS OF GLOBAL CAPITAL —

— ger a binary choice between assimilation to the West and isolation. Of course, China will not define the new order on its own, but it will provide an alternative pole and a philosophy that will find their place alongside US attempts to create a balance of power that favours democracy, the European penchant for multilateralism and Islamists' hopes of theocratic rule.

The golden thread that links China's emerging ideas about globalization is a quest for control. Chinese thinkers want to create a world where national governments can be masters of their own destiny rather than subject to the whims of global capital and American foreign policy. They want investment, technology and market access from the rest of the world, but they do not want to absorb Western values. Their goal is not to cut China off but rather to allow China to engage with the world on its own terms. In short, they want to stop China being 'flattened' by globalization. Yellow River Capitalism, deliberative dictatorship and Comprehensive National Power are the basic building blocks of this new Chinese philosophy of globalization, which seeks to re-establish a place for nation states in controlling the economy, managing politics and shaping the foreign policy agenda. Chinese leaders are already using these ideas — brick by brick — to build an alternative world order: China's 'Walled World'.

— *T*he most immediate consequence of China's rise is that the much predicted 'universalization of Western liberal democracy' has stalled. The Chinese state, with one in five of the world's population, has got off the conveyor belt that seemed to be leading it towards a Western political and economic settlement. Even if the rest of the world carried on developing regardless, this change on its own would overturn Francis Fukuyama's predictions of 'the end of history.'

The next phase of China's development could be even more dramatic. The first 30 years of the People's Republic reform programme have been mainly about China joining the world; absorbing and assimilating know-how from the West on economics, politics and foreign policy. The story of the next 30 years will be about how a more self-confident China reaches out and shapes the world. For governments in Africa, Central Asia, Latin America, and even the Middle East, China's rise means that there is no lon —



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URBAN DESIRE
2005

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THE TEMPLE OF HEAVEN —

天坛



— Although China's concern with national sovereignty and the power of the state arose at a time when China feared incursions from foreign powers, these ideas are now being projected on to the world outside. Today's 'Great Wall mentality' is not about protecting the country from foreign incursions; it is about promoting a Chinese view of sovereignty. This is not happening according to a pre-calculated master plan. China is so big, so pragmatic and so desperate to succeed that its political leadership is constantly experimenting with new ways of doing things. It used its Special Economic Zones to test out a different kind of market philosophy. Now it is testing a thousand other ideas – from public consultations to regional alliances. But from this laboratory of social experiments, a new world-view is emerging that will, in time, crystallize into a recognizable Chinese model. And China's own emancipation from the West has created an alternative, non-Western path for the rest of the world to follow. The ideal of a 'Walled World' where nation states can trade with each other on global markets but maintain their control over their economic future, their political system and their foreign policy is emerging as an ideological challenge both to the US philosophy of a 'flat world' – and to the European preference for liberal multilateralism. In this new competitive environment, Western policy-makers will need to adapt their own ideas if they want to promote and protect their liberal values.

— **A**lmost all visitors to Beijing make the pilgrimage to the Temple of Heaven, whose lantern-like profile rises like a spectre over the Chinese capital, offering its citizens an iconic glimpse of the afterlife. The intricately structured building – whose form was designed according to cosmological principles to mimic the exact shape of heaven – rises through a series of white marble clouds before reaching a plateau at the 'Altar of Heaven.' It was here that the emperor – the so-called 'Son of Heaven' – would offer sacrifices and prayers to 'the Supreme Ruler of the Universe'. His annual re-enactment of this ritual was designed to symbolize the principle of world order in ancient China, the concept of 'all-under-heaven' or 'Tian-xia'. The emperor was literally at the centre of the world order, and his rule would recognize no boundaries or limits. But even as they were flaunting their universalist ambitions at their favourite temple, the Ming emperors were building an even more famous national symbol: the Great Wall of China. The very act of opening up and looking at the world, seemed to carry with it a need to establish boundaries which could shield China from the influence of barbarians and foreigners. The Ming dynasty, like every regime in Chinese history, was obsessed with the need to hold China together and shield it from its neighbours. The Chinese have labelled this obsession with boundaries the 'Great Wall mentality.' It is a concern that runs so deep that it has infiltrated the country's identity, its lifestyle and even its alphabet: all Chinese cities are surrounded by walls, the traditional Chinese courtyard house literally takes the form of a wall surrounding an atrium, while the pictograph for 'country' is made up of a four-walled pattern. —

...

Western governments and their citizens, influenced by genocide in Rwanda, terrorist camps in Afghanistan and nuclear proliferation in Iran, began to feel a responsibility to intervene in countries that threaten human rights and international security. However, Beijing is determined to defend an older idea of sovereignty, based around the sovereign rights of states. Its rules include not invading other countries, not trying to overthrow regimes, and, above all, not interfering in the internal affairs of other states. In the place of Tony Blair's 'international community' they are pushing 'Comprehensive National Power'.

QIU ZHIJIE
TATTOO 2
1997
40.5 × 31 IN



HOW CAN WE PREVENT THE USA FROM DECLINING TOO QUICKLY? —

from What Does China Think? by Mark Leonard

我们如何能防止美国从下降太快？

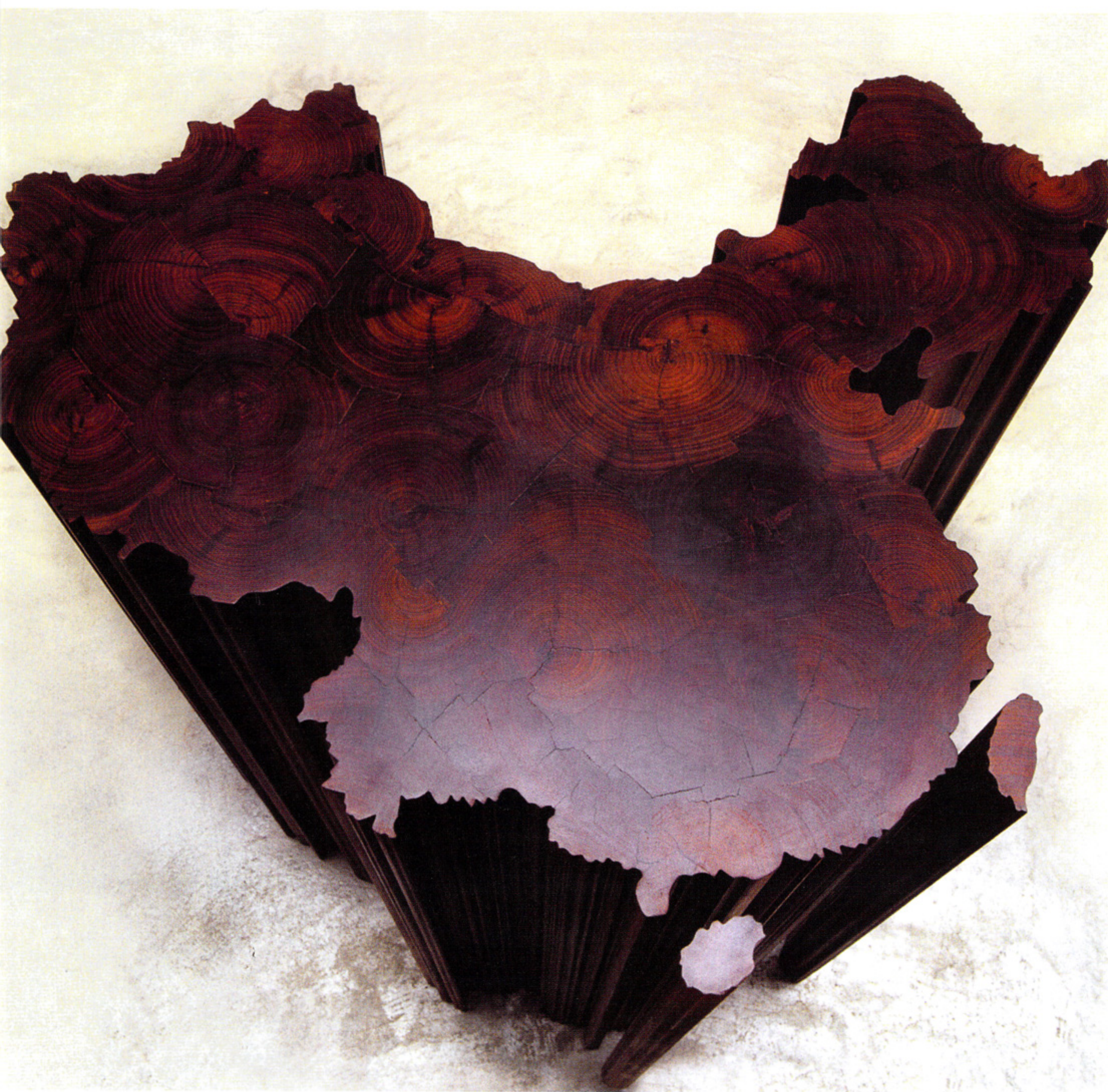
—alists alike. One of Wang Yiwei's colleagues at Fudan University, Shen Dingli, has framed the challenge even more sharply: 'have people asked themselves what would happen to the world if America declined?' he asked. Could China, Russia, the EU, Germany or Japan deliver public goods as America can, or build international political or economic institutions?' For Shen Dingli, who believes that Beijing is not yet ready for prime-time, the goal should be to 'shape an America that is more constrained and more willing to cooperate with the world'. China should use a mix of engagement and containment to shape the USA so that it becomes a responsible power: which, of course, is the exact mirror image of the US approach to China.

What these debates show is that China's rise will not be a mechanical process that can be delicately 'managed' by Western policymakers. China will actively try to 'manage' the West even as it attempts to manipulate Chinese behaviour.

—The Western world is abuzz with talk of managing China's rise. How can China be 'moulded,' 'socialized' or 'coerced' into becoming like us? How can we make it safe for a world of multilateral institutions, democracy and the rule of law? These questions, which diplomats and statesmen compulsively debate, are designed to reassure; to make us all believe that China's development is ours to shape. By framing the problem in this way, we can talk ourselves into thinking that, with skill and consideration, a new China can be built in our own image. But few Westerners realize that their anguish about China's rise has its mirror image in Beijing. A debate is stirring among Chinese scholars and officials about how to manage the West's decline; how, they are asking, can they best shape the behaviour of Western powers to advance Chinese interests and values?

This controversy burst into the open in 2006 with a provocative newspaper article by Wang Yiwei, a young scholar at Fudan University, who asked, 'How can we prevent the USA from declining too quickly?' Wang Yiwei's question generated heated responses from neocons and liberal internation—





AI WEIWEI
MAP OF CHINA
2003



XU YONG
from BACK DROPS AND BACKDROPS
published by TIME ZONE 8 LIMITED

In the year 1000, the most successful, the most flourishing and the most dynamic societies in the world were Asian. Europe was still struggling out of the Middle Ages and North America hadn't been discovered.

One thousand years later, you get the exact reverse of that: the most dynamic and flourishing societies are in North America, Europe is one tier below, and Asia is far behind. And my question is why?

How did societies that were once at the leading edge of global civilization lose an entire millennium?

Kishore Mahbubani



打好批林批孔的人民战争



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It is ridiculous to look to
the East for inspiration...
One always felt irked by
the East coming over us.
It is sheer fraud. The East is
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for tracing our steps back.
But for going forward, it
is nothing. All it can hope
for is to be fertilized by
Europe, so that it can start
on a new phase.
D.H. Lawrence, 1922





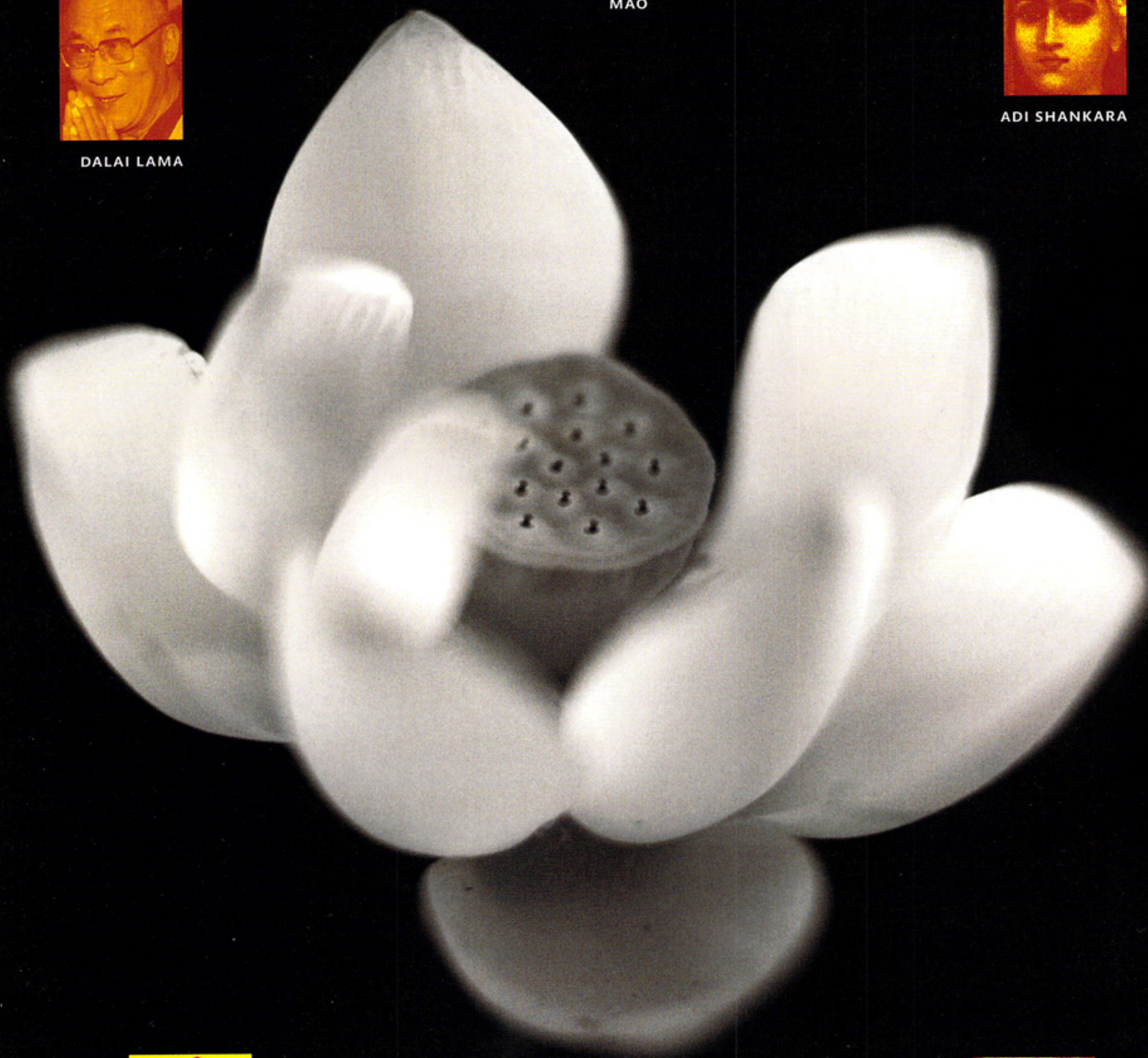
DALAI LAMA



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Time to get into an Eastern state of mind: turn the pages in your hands from left to right.



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